English Men of Letters.

Edited by John Morley.

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BURKE

MACAULAY

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JOHN MORLEY

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NOTE.

The present writer published a study on Burke some twelve years ago. It was almost entirely critical, and in no sense a narrative. The volume now submitted to the readers of this Series is biographical rather than critical, and not more than about a score of pages have been reproduced in it from the earlier book. Three pages (pp. 211–213) have been inserted from an article on Burke contributed by me to the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica;* and I have to thank Messrs. Black for the great courtesy with which they have allowed me to transcribe the passage here. These borrowings from my former self, the reader will perhaps be willing to excuse, on the old Greek principle, that a man may once say a thing as he would have it said, δὶς δὲ οὐκ ἐνδέχεται—he cannot say it twice.

J. M.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Early Life and First Writings 1

CHAPTER II.

In Ireland—Parliament—Beaconsfield 20

CHAPTER III.

The Constitutional Struggle 38

CHAPTER IV.

The Rockingham Party—Paris—Election at Bristol—The American War 60

CHAPTER V.

Economical Reform—Burke in Office—Fall of his Party 85

CHAPTER VI.

Burke and his Friends 104

CHAPTER VII.

The New Ministry—Warren Hastings—Burke's Public Position 121

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE
The French Revolution 142

CHAPTER IX.

Burke and his Party—Progress of the Revolution—Ireland—Last Years 176

CHAPTER X.

Burke's Literary Character 205

BURKE.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE, AND FIRST WRITINGS.

It will soon be a hundred and twenty years since Burke first took his seat in the House of Commons, and it is eighty-five years since his voice ceased to be heard there. Since his death, as during his life, opinion as to the place to which he is entitled among the eminent men of his country has touched every extreme. Tories have extolled him as the saviour of Europe. Whigs have detested him as the destroyer of his party. One undiscriminating panegyrist calls him the most profound and comprehensive of political philosophers that has yet existed in the world. Another and more distinguished writer insists that he is a resplendent and far-seeing rhetorician, rather than a deep and subtle thinker. A third tells us that his works cannot be too much our study, if we mean either to understand or to maintain against its various enemies, open and concealed, designing and mistaken, the singular constitution of this fortunate island. A fourth, on the contrary, declares that it would be hard to find a single leading principle or prevailing sentiment in one half of these works, to which something extremely adverse cannot be

found in the other half. A fifth calls him one of the greatest men, and, Bacon alone excepted, the greatest thinker, who ever devoted himself to the practice of English politics. Yet, oddly enough, the author of the fifth verdict will have it that this great man and great thinker was actually out of his mind, when he composed the pieces for which he has been most widely admired and revered.

A sufficient interval has now passed to allow all the sediment of party fanaticism to fall to the bottom. The circumstances of the world have since Burke's time undergone variation enough to enable us to judge, from many points of view, how far he was the splendid pamphleteer of a faction, and how far he was a contributor to the universal stock of enduring wisdom. Opinion is slowly, but without reaction, settling down to the verdict that Burke is one of the abiding names in our history, not because he either saved Europe or destroyed the Whig party; but because he added to the permanent considerations of wise political thought, and to the maxims of wise practice in great affairs, and because he imprints himself upon us with a magnificence and elevation of expression, that places him among the highest masters of literature, in one of its highest and most commanding senses. Those who have acquired a love for abstract politics amid the almost mathematical closeness and precision of Hobbes, the philosophic calm of Locke or Mill, or even the majestic and solemn fervour of Milton, are revolted by the unrestrained passion and the decorated style of Burke. His passion appears hopelessly fatal to success in the pursuit of Truth, who does not usually reveal herself to followers thus inflamed. His ornate style appears fatal to the cautious and precise method of statement, suitable to matter which is not

known at all unless it is known distinctly. Yet the natural ardour which impelled Burke to clothe his judgments in glowing and exaggerated phrases, is one secret of his power over us, because it kindles in those who are capable of that generous infection a respondent interest and sympathy. But more than this, the reader is speedily conscious of the precedence in Burke of the facts of morality and conduct, of the many interwoven affinities of human affection and historical relation, over the unreal necessities of mere abstract logic. Burke's mind was full of the matter of great truths, copiously enriched from the fountains of generous and many-coloured feeling. He thought about life as a whole, with all its infirmities and all its pomps. With none of the mental exclusiveness of the moralist by profession, he fills every page with solemn reference and meaning; with none of the mechanical bustle of the common politician, he is everywhere conscious of the mastery of laws, institutions, and government over the character and happiness of men. Besides thus diffusing a strong light over the awful tides of human circumstance, Burke has the sacred gift of inspiring men to use a grave diligence in caring for high things, and in making their lives at once rich and austere. Such a part in literature is indeed high. We feel no emotion of revolt when Mackintosh speaks of Shakespere and Burke in the same breath, as being both of them above mere talent. And we do not dissent when Macaulay, after reading Burke's works over again, exclaims, "How admirable! The greatest man since Milton!"

The precise date of Burke's birth cannot be stated with certainty. All that we can say is that it took place either in 1728 or 1729, and it is possible that we may set it

down in one or the other year, as we choose to reckon by the old or the new style. The best opinion is that he was born at Dublin on the 12th of January, 1729 (N.S.). His father was a solicitor in good practice, and is believed to have been descended from some Bourkes of county Limerick, who held a respectable local position in the time of the civil wars. Burke's mother belonged to the Nagle family, which had a strong connexion in the county of Cork; they had been among the last adherents of James II., and they remained firm Catholics. Mrs. Burke remained true to the church of her ancestors, and her only daughter was brought up in the same faith. Edmund Burke and his two brothers, Garret and Richard, were bred in the religion of their father; but Burke never, in after-times, lost a large and generous way of thinking about the more ancient creed of his mother and his uncles.

In 1741 he was sent to school at Ballitore, a village some thirty miles away from Dublin, where Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Yorkshire, had established himself fifteen years before, and had earned a wide reputation as a successful teacher and a good man. According to Burke, he richly deserved this high character. It was to Abraham Shackleton that he always professed to owe whatever gain had come to him from education. If I am anything, he said many years afterwards, it is the education I had there that has made me so. His master's skill as a teacher did not impress him more than the example which was every day set before him of uprightness and simplicity of heart. Thirty years later, when Burke had the news of Shackleton's death (1771), "I had a true honour and affection," he wrote, "for that excellent man. I feel something like a satisfaction in the midst of my concern, that I was fortunate enough to have him once under my

roof before his departure." No man has ever had a deeper or more tender reverence than Burke for homely goodness, simple purity, and all the pieties of life; it may well be that this natural predisposition of all characters at once so genial and so serious as his, was finally stamped in him by his first schoolmaster. It is true that he was only two years at Ballitore, but two years at that plastic time often build up habits in the mind that all the rest of a life is unable to pull down.

In 1743 Burke became a student of Trinity College, Dublin, and he remained there until 1748, when he took his Bachelor's degree. These five years do not appear to have been spent in strenuous industry in the beaten paths of academic routine. Like so many other men of great gifts, Burke in his youth was desultory and excursive. He roamed at large over the varied heights that tempt our curiosity, as the dawn of intelligence first lights them up one after another with bewitching visions and illusive magic. "All my studies," Burke wrote in 1746, when he was in the midst of them, "have rather proceeded from sallies of passion, than from the preference of sound reason; and, like all other natural appetites, have been very violent for a season, and very soon cooled, and quite absorbed in the succeeding. I have often thought it a humorous consideration to observe and sum up all the madness of this kind I have fallen into this two years past. First, I was greatly taken with natural philosophy; which, while I should have given my mind to logic, employed me incessantly. This I call my *furor mathematicus*. But this worked off as soon as I began to read it in the college, as men by repletion cast off their stomachs all they have eaten. Then I turned back to logic and metaphysics. Here I remained a good while, and with much pleasure, and this was my *furor logi-*

cus, a disease very common in the days of ignorance, and very uncommon in these enlightened times. Next succeeded the *furor historicus*, which also had its day, but is now no more, being entirely absorbed in the *furor poeticus*."

This is from one of Burke's letters to Richard Shackleton, the son of his schoolmaster, with whom he had formed one of those close friendships that fill the life of generous youth, as ambition fills an energetic manhood. Many tears were shed when the two boys parted at Ballitore, and they kept up their intimacy by a steady correspondence. They discuss the everlasting dispute as to the ultimate fate of those who never heard the saving name of Christ. They send one another copies of verses, and Burke prays for Shackleton's judgment on an invocation of his new poem, to beauteous nymphs who haunt the dusky wood, which hangs recumbent o'er the crystal flood. Burke is warned by Shackleton to endeavour to live according to the rules of the Gospel, and he humbly accepts the good advice, with the deprecatory plea that in a town it is difficult to sit down to think seriously: it is easier, he says, to follow the rules of the Gospel in the country, than at Trinity College, Dublin. In the region of profaner things the two friends canvass the comparative worth of Sallust and of Tully's Epistles. Burke holds for the historian, who has, he thinks, a fine, easy, diversified narrative, mixed with reflection, moral and political, neither very trite nor obvious, nor out of the way and abstract, and this is the true beauty of historical observation.

Some pages of verse describe to Shackleton how his friend passes the day, but the reader will perhaps be content to learn in humbler prose that Burke rose with the dawn, and strode forth into the country through fragrant

gardens and the pride of May, until want of breakfast drove him back unwillingly to the town, where amid lectures and books his heart incessantly turned to the river and the fir woods of Ballitore. In the evening he again turned his back on the city, taking his way "where Liffey rolls her dead dogs to the sea," along to the wall on the shore, whence he delighted to see the sun sink into the waters, gilding ocean, ships, and city as it vanished. Alas, it was beneath the dignity of verse to tell us what we should most gladly have known. For,

> "The muse nor can, nor will declare,
> What is my work, and what my studies there."

What serious nourishment Burke was laying in for his understanding, we cannot learn from any other source. He describes himself as spending three hours almost every day in the public library. "The best way in the world," he adds oddly enough, "of killing thought." I have read some history, he says, and among other pieces of history, "I am endeavouring to get a little into the accounts of this, our own poor country"—a pathetic expression, which represents Burke's perpetual mood, as long as he lived, of affectionate pity for his native land. Of the eminent Irishmen whose names adorn the annals of Trinity College in the eighteenth century, Burke was only contemporary at the University with one, the luckless sizar who in the fulness of time wrote the *Vicar of Wakefield.* There is no evidence that at this time he and Goldsmith were acquainted with one another. Flood had gone to Oxford some time before. The one or two companions whom Burke mentions in his letters are only shadows of names. The mighty Swift died in 1745, but there is nothing of Burke's upon the event. In the same year

came the Pretender's invasion, and Burke spoke of those who had taken part in it in the same generous spirit that he always showed to the partisans of lost historic causes.

Of his own family Burke says little, save that in 1746 his mother had a dangerous illness. In all my life, he writes to his friend, I never found so heavy a grief, nor really did I well know what it was before. Burke's father is said to have been a man of angry and irritable temper, and their disagreements were frequent. This unhappy circumstance made the time for parting not unwelcome. In 1747 Burke's name had been entered at the Middle Temple, and after taking his degree, he prepared to go to England to pursue the ordinary course of a lawyer's studies. He arrived in London in the early part of 1750.

A period of nine years followed, in which the circumstances of Burke's life are enveloped in nearly complete obscurity. He seems to have kept his terms in the regular way at the Temple, and from the mastery of legal principles and methods which he afterwards showed in some important transactions, we might infer that he did more to qualify himself for practice than merely dine in the hall of his Inn. For law, alike as a profession and an instrument of mental discipline, he had always the profound respect that it so amply deserves, though he saw that it was not without drawbacks of its own. The law, he said, in his fine description of George Grenville, in words that all who think about schemes of education ought to ponder, "is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences; *a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together;* but it is not apt, except in

persons very happily born, to open and to liberalize the mind exactly in the same proportion."[1] Burke was never called to the bar, and the circumstance that, about the time when he ought to have been looking for his first guinea, he published a couple of books which had as little as possible to do with either law or equity, is a tolerably sure sign that he had followed the same desultory courses at the Temple as he had followed at Trinity College. We have only to tell over again a very old story. The vague attractions of literature prevailed over the duty of taking up a serious profession. His father, who had set his heart on having a son in the rank of a barrister, was first suspicious, then extremely indignant, and at last he withdrew his son's allowance, or else reduced it so low that the recipient could not possibly live upon it. This catastrophe took place some time in 1755—a year of note in the history of literature, as the date of the publication of Johnson's Dictionary. It was upon literature, the most seductive, the most deceiving, the most dangerous of professions, that Burke, like so many hundreds of smaller men before and since, now threw himself for a livelihood.

Of the details of the struggle we know very little. Burke was not fond in after-life of talking about his earlier days, not because he had any false shame about the straits and hard shifts of youthful neediness, but because he was endowed with a certain inborn stateliness of nature, which made him unwilling to waste thoughts on the less dignified parts of life. This is no unqualified virtue, and Burke might have escaped some wearisome frets and embarrassments in his existence, if he had been capable of letting the detail of the day lie more heavily upon him.

[1] *American Taxation.*

So far as it goes, however, it is a sign of mental health that a man should be able to cast behind him the barren memories of bye-gone squalor. We may be sure that whatever were the external ordeals of his apprenticeship in the slippery craft of the literary adventurer, Burke never failed in keeping for his constant companions generous ambitions and high thoughts. He appears to have frequented the debating clubs in Fleet Street and the Piazza of Covent Garden, and he showed the common taste of his time for the theatre. He was much of a wanderer, partly from the natural desire of restless youth to see the world, and partly because his health was weak. In after-life he was a man of great strength, capable not only of bearing the strain of prolonged application to books and papers in the solitude of his library, but of bearing it at the same time with the distracting combination of active business among men. At the date of which we are speaking, he used to seek a milder air at Bristol, or in Monmouthshire, or Wiltshire. He passed the summer in retired country villages, reading and writing with desultory industry, in company with William Burke, a namesake but perhaps no kinsman. It would be interesting to know the plan and scope of his studies. We are practically reduced to conjecture. In a letter of counsel to his son in after-years, he gave him a weighty piece of advice, which is pretty plainly the key to the reality and fruitfulness of his own knowledge. "*Reading*," he said, "*and much reading is good. But the power of diversifying the matter infinitely in your own mind, and of applying it to every occasion that arises, is far better; so don't suppress the* vivida vis." We have no more of Burke's doings than obscure and tantalizing glimpses, tantalizing, because he was then at the age when character usually either fritters itself

away, or grows strong on the inward sustenance of solid and resolute aspirations. Writing from Battersea to his old comrade, Shackleton, in 1757, he begins with an apology for a long silence which seems to have continued from months to years. "I have broken all rules; I have neglected all decorums; everything except that I have never forgot a friend, whose good head and heart have made me esteem and love him. What appearance there may have been of neglect, arises from my manner of life; chequered with various designs; sometimes in London, sometimes in remote parts of the country; sometimes in France, and shortly, please God, to be in America."

One of the hundred inscrutable rumours that hovered about Burke's name was, that he at one time actually did visit America. This was just as untrue as that he became a convert to the Catholic faith; or that he was the lover of Peg Woffington; or that he contested Adam Smith's chair of moral philosophy at Glasgow along with Hume, and that both Burke and Hume were rejected in favour of some fortunate Mr. James Clow. They are all alike unfounded. But the same letter informs Shackleton of a circumstance more real and more important than any of these, though its details are only doubtfully known. Burke had married — when and where, we cannot tell. Probably the marriage took place in the winter of 1756. His wife was the daughter of Dr. Nugent, an Irish physician once settled at Bath. One story is that Burke consulted him in one of his visits to the west of England, and fell in love with his daughter. Another version makes Burke consult him after Dr. Nugent had removed to London; and tells how the kindly physician, considering that the noise and bustle of chambers over a shop must hinder his patient's recovery, offered him rooms in his own house.

However these things may have been, all the evidence shows Burke to have been fortunate in the choice or accident that bestowed upon him his wife. Mrs. Burke, like her father, was, up to the time of her marriage, a Catholic. Good judges belonging to her own sex describe her as gentle, quiet, soft in her manners, and well-bred. She had the qualities which best fitted and disposed her to soothe the vehemence and irritability of her companion. Though she afterwards conformed to the religion of her husband, it was no insignificant coincidence that in two of the dearest relations of his life the atmosphere of Catholicism was thus poured round the great preacher of the crusade against the Revolution.

About the time of his marriage, Burke made his first appearance as an author. It was in 1756 that he published *A Vindication of Natural Society*, and the more important essay, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful.* The latter of them had certainly been written a long time before, and there is even a traditional legend that Burke wrote it when he was only nineteen years old. Both of these performances have in different degrees a historic meaning, but neither of them would have survived to our own day unless they had been associated with a name of power. A few words will suffice to do justice to them here. And first as to the *Vindication of Natural Society.* Its alternative title was, *A View of the Miseries and Evils arising to Mankind from every Species of Civil Society, in a Letter to Lord ——, by a late Noble Writer.* Bolingbroke had died in 1751, and in 1754 his philosophical works were posthumously given to the world by David Mallet, Dr. Johnson's beggarly Scotchman, to whom Bolingbroke had left half-a-crown in his will, for firing off a blunderbuss

which he was afraid to fire off himself. The world of letters had been keenly excited about Bolingbroke. His busy and chequered career, his friendship with the great wits of the previous generation, his splendid style, his bold opinions, made him a dazzling figure. This was the late Noble Writer whose opinions Burke intended to ridicule, by reducing them to an absurdity in an exaggeration of Bolingbroke's own manner. As it happened, the public did not readily perceive either the exaggeration in the manner, or the satire in the matter. Excellent judges of style made sure that the writing was really Bolingbroke's, and serious critics of philosophy never doubted that the writer, whoever he was, meant all that he said. We can hardly help agreeing with Godwin, when he says that in Burke's treatise the evils of existing political institutions, which had been described by Locke, are set forth more at large, with incomparable force of reasoning and lustre of eloquence, though the declared intention of the writer was to show that such evils ought to be considered merely trivial. Years afterwards, Boswell asked Johnson whether an imprudent publication by a certain friend of his at an early period of his life, would be likely to hurt him? "No, sir," replied the sage; "not much; it might perhaps be mentioned at an election." It is significant that in 1765, when Burke saw his chance of a seat in Parliament, he thought it worth while to print a second edition of his *Vindication*, with a preface to assure his readers that the design of it was ironical. It has been remarked as a very extraordinary circumstance that an author who had the greatest fame of any man of his day as the master of a superb style, for this was indeed Bolingbroke's position, should have been imitated to such perfection by a mere novice, that accomplished critics like Chesterfield and War-

burton should have mistaken the copy for a first-rate original. It is, however, to be remembered that the very boldness and sweeping rapidity of Bolingbroke's prose rendered it more fit for imitation, than if its merits had been those of delicacy or subtlety; and we must remember that the imitator was no pygmy, but himself one of the giants. What is certain is that the study of Bolingbroke which preceded this excellent imitation left a permanent mark, and traces of Bolingbroke were never effaced from the style of Burke.

The point of the *Vindication* is simple enough. It is to show that the same instruments which Bolingbroke had employed in favour of natural against revealed religion, could be employed with equal success in favour of natural as against, what Burke calls, artificial society. "Show me," cries the writer, "an absurdity in religion, and I will undertake to show you a hundred for one in political laws and institutions. . . . If, after all, you should confess all these things yet plead the necessity of political institutions, weak and wicked as they are, I can argue with equal, perhaps superior force, concerning the necessity of artificial religion; and every step you advance in your argument, you add a strength to mine. So that, if we are resolved to submit our reason and our liberty to civil usurpation, we have nothing to do but to conform as quietly as we can to the vulgar notions which are connected with this, and take up the theology of the vulgar as well as their politics. But if we think this necessity rather imaginary than real, we should renounce their dreams of society, together with their visions of religion, and vindicate ourselves into perfect liberty."

The most interesting fact about this spirited performance is, that it is a satirical literary handling of the great

proposition which Burke enforced, with all the thunder and lurid effulgence of his most passionate rhetoric, five-and-thirty years later. This proposition is that the world would fall into ruin, "if the practice of all moral duties, and the foundations of society, rested upon having their reasons made clear and demonstrative to every individual." The satire is intended for an illustration of what with Burke was the cardinal truth for men, namely, that if you encourage every individual to let the imagination loose upon all subjects, without any restraint from a sense of his own weakness, and his subordinate rank in the long scheme of things, then there is nothing of all that the opinion of ages has agreed to regard as excellent and venerable, which would not be exposed to destruction at the hands of rationalistic criticism. This was Burke's most fundamental and unswerving conviction from the first piece that he wrote down to the last, and down to the last hour of his existence.

It is a coincidence worth noticing that only two years before the appearance of the *Vindication*, Rousseau had published the second of the two memorable Discourses in which he insisted with serious eloquence on that which Burke treats as a triumph of irony. He believed, and many thousands of Frenchmen came to a speculative agreement with him, that artificial society had marked a decline in the felicity of man, and there are passages in the Discourse in which he demonstrates this, that are easily interchangeable with passages in the *Vindication*. Who would undertake to tell us from internal evidence whether the following page, with its sombre glow, is an extract from Burke, or an extract from the book which Rousseau begins by the sentence that man is born free, yet is he everywhere in chains?

There are in Great Britain upwards of a hundred thousand people employed in lead, tin, iron, copper, and coal mines; these unhappy wretches scarce ever see the light of the sun; they are buried in the bowels of the earth; there they work at a severe and dismal task, without the least prospect of being delivered from it; they subsist upon the coarsest and worst sort of fare; they have their health miserably impaired, and their lives cut short, by being perpetually confined in the close vapour of these malignant minerals. A hundred thousand more at least are tortured without remission by the suffocating smoke, intense fires, and constant drudgery, necessary in refining and managing the products of those mines. If any man informed us that two hundred thousand innocent persons were condemned to so intolerable slavery, how should we pity the unhappy sufferers, and how great would be our just indignation against those who inflicted so cruel and ignominious a punishment! . . . But this number, considerable as it is, and the slavery, with all its baseness and horror, which we have at home, is nothing to what the rest of the world affords of the same nature. Millions daily bathed in the poisonous damps and destructive effluvia of lead, silver, copper, and arsenic, to say nothing of those other employments, those stations of wretchedness and contempt, in which civil society has placed the numerous *enfans perdus* of her army. Would any rational man submit to one of the most tolerable of these drudgeries, for all the artificial enjoyments which policy has made to result from them? . . . Indeed, the blindness of one part of mankind co-operating with the frenzy and villany of the other, has been the real builder of this respectable fabric of political society: and as the blindness of mankind has caused their slavery, in return their state of slavery is made a pretence for continuing them in a state of blindness; for the politician will tell you gravely, that their life of servitude disqualifies the greater part of the race of man for a search of truth, and supplies them with no other than mean and insufficient ideas. This is but too true; and this is one of the reasons for which I blame such institutions.

From the very beginning, therefore, Burke was drawn to the deepest of all the currents in the thought of the eighteenth century. Johnson and Goldsmith continued

the traditions of social and polite literature which had been established by the Queen Anne men. Warburton and a whole host of apologists carried on the battle against deism and infidelity. Hume, after furnishing the arsenal of scepticism with a new array of deadlier engines and more abundant ammunition, had betaken himself placidly to the composition of history. What is remarkable in Burke's first performance is his discernment of the important fact, that behind the intellectual disturbances in the sphere of philosophy, and the noisier agitations in the sphere of theology, there silently stalked a force that might shake the whole fabric of civil society itself. In France, as all students of its speculative history are agreed, there came a time in the eighteenth century when theological controversy was turned into political controversy. Innovators left the question about the truth of Christianity, and busied themselves with questions about the ends and means of governments. The appearance of Burke's *Vindication of Natural Society* coincides in time with the beginning of this important transformation. Burke foresaw from the first what, if rationalism were allowed to run an unimpeded course, would be the really great business of the second half of his century.

If in his first book Burke showed how alive he was to the profound movement of the time, in the second he dealt with one of the most serious of its more superficial interests. The essay on the Sublime and Beautiful fell in with a set of topics, on which the curiosity of the better minds of the age, alike in France, England, and Germany, was fully stirred. In England the essay has been ordinarily slighted; it has perhaps been overshadowed by its author's fame in weightier matters. The nearest approach to a full and serious treatment of its main positions is to be found

in Dugald Stewart's lectures. The great rhetorical art-critic of our own day refers to it in words of disparagement, and in truth it has none of the flummery of modern criticism. It is a piece of hard thinking, and it has the distinction of having interested and stimulated Lessing, the author of *Laoköon* (1766), by far the most definitely valuable of all the contributions to æsthetic thought in an age which was not poor in them. Lessing was so struck with the *Inquiry* that he set about a translation of it, and the correspondence between him and Moses Mendelssohn on the questions which Burke had raised, contains the germs of the doctrine as to poetry and painting which *Laoköon* afterwards made so famous. Its influence on Lessing and on Kant was such as to justify the German historian of the literature of the century in bestowing on it the coveted epithet of epoch-making.

The book is full of crudities. We feel the worse side of the eighteenth century when Burke tells us that a thirst for Variety in architecture is sure to leave very little true taste; or that an air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty; or that sad fuscous colours are indispensable for sublimity. Many of the sections, again, are little more than expanded definitions from the dictionary. Any tiro may now be shocked at such a proposition as that beauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system. But at least one signal merit remains to the *Inquiry*. It was a vigorous enlargement of the principle, which Addison had not long before timidly illustrated, that critics of art seek its principles in the wrong place, so long as they limit their search to poems, pictures, engravings, statues, and buildings, instead of first arranging the sentiments and faculties in man to which art makes its appeal. Addison's treatment was slight, and merely literary; Burke

dealt boldly with his subject on the base of the most scientific psychology that was then within his reach. To approach it on the psychological side at all, was to make a distinct and remarkable advance in the method of the inquiry which he had taken in hand.

CHAPTER II.

IN IRELAND—PARLIAMENT—BEACONSFIELD.

Burke was thirty years old before he approached even the threshold of the arena in which he was destined to be so great a figure. He had made a mark in literature, and it was to literature rather than to public affairs that his ambition turned. He had naturally become acquainted with the brother authors who haunted the coffee-houses in Fleet Street; and Burke, along with his father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, was one of the first members of the immortal club where Johnson did conversational battle with all comers. We shall, in a later chapter, have something to say on Burke's friendships with the followers of his first profession, and on the active sympathy with which he helped those who were struggling into authorship. Meanwhile, the fragments that remain of his own attempts in this direction are no considerable contributions. His *Hints for an Essay on the Drama* are jejune and infertile, when compared with the vigorous and original thought of Diderot and Lessing at about the same period. He wrote an Account of the European Settlements in America. His *Abridgment of the History of England* comes down no further than to the reign of John. A much more important undertaking than his history of the past, was his design for a yearly chronicle of the present. The *Annual Register* began to appear in 1759. Dodsley, the bookseller

of Pall Mall, provided the sinews of war, and he gave Burke a hundred pounds a year for his survey of the great events which were then passing in the world. The scheme was probably born of the circumstances of the hour, for this was the climax of the Seven Years' War. The clang of arms was heard in every quarter of the globe, and in East and West new lands were being brought under the dominion of Great Britain.

In this exciting crisis of national affairs, Burke began to be acquainted with public men. In 1759 he was introduced, probably by Lord Charlemont, to William Gerard Hamilton, who only survives in our memories by his nickname of Single-speech. As a matter of fact, he made many speeches in Parliament, and some good ones, but none so good as the first, delivered in a debate in 1755, in which Pitt, Fox, Grenville, and Murray all took part, and were all outshone by the new luminary. But the new luminary never shone again with its first brilliance. He sought Burke out on the strength of the success of the *Vindication of Natural Society*, and he seems to have had a taste for good company. Horace Walpole describes a dinner at his house in the summer of 1761. "There were Garrick," he says, "and a young Mr. Burke, who wrote a book in the style of Lord Bolingbroke, that is much admired. He is a sensible man, but has not worn off his authorism yet, and thinks there is nothing so charming as writers, and to be one. He will know better one of these days." The prophecy came true in time, but it was Burke's passion for authorism that eventually led to a rupture with his first patron. Hamilton was a man of ability, but selfish and unreasonable. Dr. Leland afterwards described him compendiously as a sullen, vain, proud, selfish, canker-hearted, envious reptile.

In 1761 Hamilton went to Ireland as secretary to Lord Halifax, and Burke accompanied him in some indefinite capacity. "The absenteeism of her men of genius," an eminent historian has said, "was a worse wrong to Ireland than the absenteeism of her landlords. If Edmund Burke had remained in the country where Providence had placed him, he might have changed the current of its history."[1] It is at least to be said that Burke was never so absorbed in other affairs, as to forget the peculiar interests of his native land. We have his own word, and his career does not belie it, that in the elation with which he was filled on being elected a member of Parliament, what was first and uppermost in his thoughts was the hope of being somewhat useful to the place of his birth and education; and to the last he had in it "a dearness of instinct more than he could justify to reason." In fact the affairs of Ireland had a most important part in Burke's life at one or two critical moments, and this is as convenient a place as we are likely to find for describing in a few words what were the issues. The brief space can hardly be grudged in an account of a great political writer, for Ireland has furnished the chief ordeal, test, and standard of English statesmen.

Ireland in the middle of the eighteenth century was to England just what the American colonies would have been, if they had contained, besides the European settlers, more than twice their number of unenslaved negroes. After the suppression of the great rebellion of Tyrconnel by William of Orange, nearly the whole of the land was confiscated, the peasants were made beggars and outlaws, the Penal Laws against the Catholics were enacted and enforced, and the grand reign of Protestant Ascendancy began in all its

[1] Froude's *Ireland*, ii. 214.

vileness and completeness. The Protestants and landlords were supreme; the peasants and the Catholics were prostrate in despair. The Revolution brought about in Ireland just the reverse of what it effected in England. Here it delivered the body of the nation from the attempted supremacy of a small sect. There it made a small sect supreme over the body of the nation. "It was, to say the truth," Burke wrote, "not a revolution but a conquest," and the policy of conquest was treated as the just and normal system of government. The last conquest of England was in the eleventh century. The last conquest of Ireland was at the very end of the seventeenth.

Sixty years after these events, when Burke revisited Ireland, some important changes had taken place. The English settlers of the beginning of the century had formed an Irish interest. They had become Anglo-Irish, just as the colonists still further west had formed a colonial interest and become Anglo-American. The same conduct on the part of the mother country promoted the growth of these hostile interests in both cases. The commercial policy pursued by England towards America was identical with that pursued towards Ireland. The industry of the Anglo-Irish traders was restricted, their commerce and even their production fettered, their prosperity checked, for the benefit of the merchants of Manchester and Bristol. *Crescit Roma Albæ ruinis.* "The bulk of the people," said Stone, the Primate, "are not regularly either lodged, clothed, or fed; and those things which in England are called necessaries of life, are to us only accidents, and we can, and in many places do, subsist without them." On the other hand, the peasantry had gradually taken heart to resent their spoliation and attempted extirpation, and in 1761 their misery under the exactions of landlords and a church

which tried to spread Christianity by the brotherly agency of the tithe-proctor, gave birth to Whiteboyism—a terrible spectre, which, under various names and with various modifications, has ridden Ireland down to our own time.

Burke saw the Protestant traders of the dependency the victims of the colonial and commercial system; the Catholic land-owners legally dispossessed by the operation of the penal laws; the Catholic peasantry deeply penetrated with an insurgent and vindictive spirit; and the imperial government standing very much aloof, and leaving the country to the tender mercies of the Undertakers and some Protestant churchmen. The Anglo-Irish were bitterly discontented with the mother country; and the Catholic native Irish were regarded by their Protestant oppressors with exactly that combination of intense contempt and loathing, and intense rage and terror, which their American counterpart would have divided between the Negro and the Red Indian. To the Anglo-Irish the native peasant was as odious as the first, and as terrible as the second. Even at the close of the century Burke could declare that the various descriptions of the people were kept as much apart, as if they were not only separate nations, but separate species. There were thousands, he says, who had never talked to a Roman Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to a gardener's workman, or some other labourer of the second or third order, while a little time before this they were so averse to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who could never find their way beyond the stables. Chesterfield, a thoroughly impartial and just observer, said in 1764 that the poor people in Ireland were used worse than negroes by their masters and the middlemen. We should never forget that in the transactions with the English gov-

ernment during the eighteenth century, the people concerned were not the Irish, but the Anglo-Irish, the colonists of 1691. They were an aristocracy, as Adam Smith said of them, not founded in the natural and respectable distinctions of birth and fortune, but in the most odious of all distinctions, those of religious and political prejudices —distinctions which, more than any other, animate both the insolence of the oppressors, and the hatred and indignation of the oppressed.

The directions in which Irish improvement would move, were clear from the middle of the century to men with much less foresight than Burke had. The removal of all commercial restrictions, either by Independence or Union, on the one hand; and the gradual emancipation of the Catholics, on the other; were the two processes to which every consideration of good government manifestly pointed. The first proved a much shorter and simpler process than the second. To the first the only obstacle was the blindness and selfishness of the English merchants. The second had to overcome the virulent opposition of the tyrannical Protestant faction in Ireland, and the disgraceful but deep-rooted antipathies of the English nation. The history of the relation between the mother country and her dependency during Burke's life, may be characterized as a commercial and legislative struggle between the imperial government and the Anglo-Irish interest, in which each side for its own convenience, as the turn served, drew support from the Catholic majority.

A Whiteboy outbreak, attended by the usual circumstances of disorder and violence, took place while Burke was in Ireland. It suited the interests of faction to represent these commotions as the symptoms of a deliberate rebellion. The malcontents were represented as carrying

on treasonable correspondence, sometimes with Spain and sometimes with France; they were accused of receiving money and arms from their foreign sympathizers, and of aiming at throwing off the English rule. Burke says that he had means and the desire of informing himself to the bottom upon the matter, and he came strongly to the conclusion that this was not a true view of what had happened. What had happened was due, he thought, to no plot, but to superficial and fortuitous circumstances. He consequently did not shrink from describing it as criminal, that the king's Catholic subjects in Ireland should have been subjected, on no good grounds, to harassing persecution, and that numbers of them should have been ruined in fortune, imprisoned, tried, and capitally executed for a rebellion which was no rebellion at all. The episode is only important as illustrating the strong and manly temper in which Burke, unlike too many of his countrymen with fortunes to make by English favour, uniformly considered the circumstances of his country. It was not until a later time that he had an opportunity of acting conspicuously on her behalf, but whatever influence he came to acquire with his party was unflinchingly used against the cruelty of English prejudice.

Burke appears to have remained in Ireland for two years (1761–3). In 1763 Hamilton, who had found him an invaluable auxiliary, procured for him, principally with the aid of the Primate Stone, a pension of three hundred pounds a year from the Irish Treasury. In thanking him for this service, Burke proceeded to bargain that the obligation should not bind him to give to his patron the whole of his time. He insisted on being left with a discreet liberty to continue a little work which he had as a rent-charge upon his thoughts. Whatever advantages he had

acquired, he says, had been due to literary reputation, and he could only hope for a continuance of such advantages on condition of doing something to keep the same reputation alive. What this literary design was we do not know with certainty. It is believed to have been a history of England, of which, as I have said, a fragment remains. Whatever the work may have been, it was an offence to Hamilton. With an irrational stubbornness that may well astound us when we think of the noble genius that he thus wished to confine to paltry personal duties, he persisted that Burke should bind himself to his service for life, and to the exclusion of other interests. "To circumscribe my hopes," cried Burke, "to give up even the possibility of liberty, to annihilate myself for ever!" He threw up the pension, which he had held for two years, and declined all further connexion with Hamilton, whom he roundly described as an infamous scoundrel. "Six of the best years of my life he took me from every pursuit of my literary reputation, or of improvement of my fortune. . . . In all this time you may easily conceive how much I felt at seeing myself left behind by almost all of my contemporaries. There never was a season more favourable for any man who chose to enter into the career of public life; and I think I am not guilty of ostentation in supposing my own moral character, and my industry, my friends and connexions, when Mr. Hamilton first sought my acquaintance, were not at all inferior to those of several whose fortune is at this day upon a very different footing from mine."

It was not long before a more important opening offered itself, which speedily brought Burke into the main stream of public life. In the summer of 1765 a change of ministry took place. It was the third since the king's accession five years ago. First, Pitt had been disgraced, and

the old Duke of Newcastle dismissed. Then Bute came into power, but Bute quailed before the storm of calumny and hate which his Scotch nationality, and the supposed source of his power over the king, had raised in every town in England. After Lord Bute, George Grenville undertook the Government. Before he had been many months in office, he had sown the seeds of war in the colonies, wearied parliament, and disgusted the king. In June, 1765, Grenville was dismissed. With profound reluctance the king had no other choice than to summon Lord Rockingham, and Lord Rockingham, in a happy moment for himself and his party, was induced to offer Burke a post as his private secretary. A government by country gentlemen is too apt to be a government of ignorance, and Lord Rockingham was without either experience or knowledge. He felt, or friends felt for him, the advantage of having at his side a man who was chiefly known as an author in the service of Dodsley, and as having conducted the *Annual Register* with great ability, but who even then was widely spoken of as nothing less than an encyclopædia of political knowledge.

It is commonly believed that Burke was commended to Lord Rockingham by William Fitzherbert. Fitzherbert was President of the Board of Trade in the new government, but he is more likely to be remembered as Dr. Johnson's famous example of the truth of the observation, that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive, because he was the most acceptable man in London, and yet overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Besides Fitzherbert's influence, we have it on

Burke's own authority that his promotion was partly due to that mysterious person, William Burke, who was at the same time appointed an under-secretary of state. There must have been unpleasant rumours afloat as to the Burke connexion, and we shall presently consider what they were worth. Meanwhile, it is enough to say that the old Duke of Newcastle hurried to the new premier, and told him the appointment would never do: that the new secretary was not only an Irish adventurer, which was true, but that he was an Irish papist, which was not true; that he was a Jesuit, that he was a spy from Saint Omer's, and that his real name was O'Bourke. Lord Rockingham behaved like a man of sense and honour, sent for Burke, and repeated to him what he had heard. Burke warmly denounced the truthlessness of the Duke's tattle: he insisted that the reports which his chief had heard would probably, even unknown to himself, create in his mind such suspicions as would stand in the way of a thorough confidence. No earthly consideration, he said, should induce him to continue in relations with a man whose trust in him was not entire; and he pressed his resignation. To this Lord Rockingham would not consent, and from that time until his death, seventeen years afterwards, the relations between them were those of loyal and honourable service on the one hand, and generous and appreciative friendship on the other. Six-and-twenty years afterwards (1791) Burke remembered the month in which he had first become connected with a man whose memory, he said, will ever be precious to Englishmen of all parties, as long as the ideas of honour and virtue, public and private, are understood and cherished in this nation.

The Rockingham ministry remained in office for a year and twenty days (1765–6). About the middle of this

term (Dec. 26, 1765), Burke was returned to Parliament for the borough of Wendover, by the influence of Lord Verney, who owned it, and who also returned William Burke for another borough. Lord Verney was an Irish peer, with large property in Buckinghamshire; he now represented that county in Parliament. It was William Burke's influence with Lord Verney that procured for his namesake the seat at Wendover. Burke made his first speech in the House of Commons a few days after the opening of the session of 1766 (Jan. 27), and was honoured by a compliment from Pitt, still the Great Commoner. A week later he spoke again on the same momentous theme, the complaints of the American colonists, and his success was so marked that good judges predicted, in the stiff phraseology of the time, that he would soon add the palm of the orator to the laurel of the writer and the philosopher. The friendly Dr. Johnson wrote to Langton, that Burke had gained more reputation than any man at his first appearance had ever gained before. The session was a great triumph to the new member, but it brought neither strength nor popularity to the administration. At the end of it, the king dismissed them, and the Chatham government was formed; that strange combination which has been made famous by Burke's description of it, as a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed, such a piece of diversified mosaic, such a tesselated pavement without cement, that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand upon. There was no obvious reason why Burke should not have joined the new ministry. The change was at first one of persons, rather than of principles or of measures. To put himself, as Burke afterwards said, out of the way of the negotiations which were then being carried

on very eagerly and through many channels with the Earl of Chatham, he went to Ireland very soon after the change of ministry. He was free from party engagements, and more than this, he was free at the express desire of his friends; for on the very day of his return, the Marquis of Rockingham wished him to accept office under the new system. Burke "believes he might have had such a situation, but he cheerfully took his fate with his party." In a short time he rendered his party the first of a long series of splendid literary services by writing his *Observations on the Present State of the Nation* (1769). It was a reply to a pamphlet by George Grenville, in which the disappointed minister accused his successors of ruining the country. Burke, in answering the charge, showed a grasp of commercial and fiscal details at least equal to that of Grenville himself, then considered the first man of his time in dealing with the national trade and resources. To this easy mastery of the special facts of the discussion, Burke added the far rarer art of lighting them up by broad principles, and placing himself and his readers at the highest and most effective point of view for commanding their general bearings.

If Burke had been the Irish adventurer that his enemies described, he might well have seized with impatience the opening to office that the recent exhibition of his powers in the House of Commons had now made accessible to him. There was not a man in Great Britain to whom the emoluments of office would have been more useful. It is one of the standing mysteries in literary biography, how Burke could think of entering Parliament without any means that anybody can now trace of earning a fitting livelihood. Yet at this time Burke, whom we saw not long ago writing for the booksellers, had become affluent

enough to pay a yearly allowance to Barry, the painter, in order to enable him to study the pictures in the great European galleries, and to make a prolonged residence at Rome. A little later he took a step which makes the riddle still more difficult, and which has given abundant employment to wits who are *maximi in minimis*, and think that every question which they can ask, yet to which history has thought it worth while to leave no answer, is somehow a triumph of their own learning and dialectic.

In 1769 Burke purchased a house and lands known as Gregories, in the parishes of Penn and Beaconsfield, in the county of Bucks. It has often been asked, and naturally enough, how a man who, hardly more than a few months before, was still contented to earn an extra hundred pounds a year by writing for Dodsley, should now have launched out as the buyer of a fine house and estate, which cost upwards of twenty-two thousand pounds, which could not be kept up on less than two thousand five hundred a year, and of which the returns did not amount to one-fifth of that sum. Whence did he procure the money, and what is perhaps more difficult to answer, how came he first to entertain the idea of a design so ill-proportioned to anything that we can now discern in his means and prospects? The common answer from Burke's enemies, and even from some neutral inquirers, gives to every lover of this great man's high character an unpleasant shock. It is alleged that he had plunged into furious gambling in East India stock. The charge was current at the time, and it was speedily revived when Burke's abandonment of his party, after the French Revolution, exposed him to a thousand attacks of reckless and uncontrolled virulence. It has been stirred by one or two pertinacious critics nearer our own time, and none of the biographers have dealt with the per-

plexities of the matter as they ought to have done. Nobody, indeed, has ever pretended to find one jot or tittle of direct evidence that Burke himself took a part in the gambling in India or other stocks. There is evidence that he was a holder of the stock, and no more. But what is undeniable is that Richard Burke, his brother, William Burke, his intimate if not his kinsman, and Lord Verney, his political patron, were all three at this time engaged together in immense transactions in East India stock; that in 1769 the stock fell violently; that they were unable to pay their differences; and that in the very year in which Edmund Burke bought Gregories, they were utterly ruined, two of them beyond retrieval. Again it is clear that, after this, Richard Burke was engaged in land-jobbing in the West Indies; that his claims were disputed by the Government as questionable and dishonest; and that he lost his case. Edmund Burke was said, in the gossip of the day, to be deeply interested in land at Saint Vincent's. But there is no evidence. What cannot be denied is that an unpleasant taint of speculation and financial adventurership hung at one time about the whole connexion, and that the adventures invariably came to an unlucky end.

Whether Edmund Burke and William Burke were relations or not, and if so, in what degree they were relations, neither of them ever knew; they believed that their fathers sometimes called one another cousins, and that was all that they had to say on the subject. But they were as intimate as brothers, and when William Burke went to mend his broken fortunes in India, Edmund Burke commended him to Philip Francis—then fighting his deadly duel of five years with Warren Hastings at Calcutta—as one whom he had tenderly loved, highly valued, and continually lived with in an union not to be expressed, quite

since their boyish years. "Looking back to the course of my life," he wrote in 1771, "I remember no one considerable benefit in the whole of it which I did not, mediately or immediately, derive from William Burke." There is nothing intrinsically incredible, therefore, considering this intimacy and the community of purse and home which subsisted among the three Burkes, in the theory that when Edmund Burke bought his property in Buckinghamshire, he looked for help from the speculations of Richard and William. However this may have been, from them no help came. Many years afterwards (1783), Lord Verney filed a bill in Chancery claiming from Edmund Burke a sum of 6000*l.*, which he alleged that he had lent at the instigation of William Burke to assist in completing the purchase of Beaconsfield. Burke's sworn answer denied all knowledge of the transaction, and the plaintiff did not get the relief for which he had prayed.

In a letter to Shackleton (May 1, 1768) Burke gave the following account of what he had done:—"I have made a push," he says, "with all I could collect of my own, and the aid of my friends, to cast a little root in this country. I have purchased a house, with an estate of about six hundred acres of land, in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London. It is a place exceedingly pleasant; and I propose, God willing, to become a farmer in good earnest. You who are classical will not be displeased to know that it was formerly the seat of Waller, the poet, whose house, or part of it, makes at present the farm-house within an hundred yards of me." The details of the actual purchase of Beaconsfield have been made tolerably clear. The price was twenty-two thousand pounds, more or less. Fourteen thousand were left on mortgage, which remained outstanding until the sale of the property by Mrs. Burke in 1812.

Garret Burke, the elder brother, had shortly before the purchase made Edmund his residuary legatee, and this bequest is rather conjecturally estimated at two thousand pounds. The balance of six thousand was advanced by Lord Rockingham on Burke's bond.

The purchase after all was the smallest part of the matter, and it still remains a puzzle not only how Burke was able to maintain so handsome an establishment, but how he could ever suppose it likely that he would be able to maintain it. He counted, no doubt, on making some sort of income by farming, but then he might well have known that an absorbed politician would hardly be able, as he called it, to turn farmer in good earnest. For a short time he received a salary of seven hundred pounds a year as agent for New York. We may perhaps take for granted that he made as much more out of his acres. He received something from Dodsley for his work on the *Annual Register* down to 1788. But when all these resources have been counted up, we cannot but see the gulf of a great yearly deficit. The unhappy truth is that from the middle of 1769, when we find him applying to Garrick for the loan of a thousand pounds, down to 1794, when the king gave him a pension, Burke was never free from the harassing strain of debts and want of money. It has been stated with good show of authority, that his obligations to Lord Rockingham amounted to not less than thirty thousand pounds. When that nobleman died (1782), with a generosity which is not the less honourable to him for having been so richly earned by the faithful friend who was the object of it, he left instructions to his executors that all Burke's bonds should be destroyed.

We may indeed wish from the bottom of our hearts that all this had been otherwise. But those who press it

as a reproach against Burke's memory may be justly reminded that when Pitt died, after drawing the pay of a minister for twenty years, he left debts to the amount of forty thousand pounds. Burke, as I have said elsewhere, had none of the vices of profusion, but he had that quality which Aristotle places high among the virtues—the noble mean of Magnificence, standing midway between the two extremes of vulgar ostentation and narrow pettiness. At least, every creditor was paid in good time, and nobody suffered but himself. Those who think these disagreeable matters of supreme importance, and allow such things to stand between them and Burke's greatness, are like the people—slightly to alter a figure from a philosopher of old—who, when they went to Olympia, could only perceive that they were scorched by the sun, and pressed by the crowd, and deprived of comfortable means of bathing, and wetted by the rain, and that life was full of disagreeable and troublesome things, and so they almost forgot the great colossus of ivory and gold, Phidias's statue of Zeus, which they had come to see, and which stood in all its glory and power before their perturbed and foolish vision.

There have been few men in history with whom personal objects counted for so little as they counted with Burke. He really did what so many public men only feign to do. He forgot that he had any interests of his own to be promoted, apart from the interests of the party with which he acted, and from those of the whole nation, for which he held himself a trustee. What William Burke said of him in 1766 was true throughout his life —"Ned is full of real business, intent upon doing solid good to his country, as much as if he was to receive twenty per cent. from the Empire." Such men as the shrewd and impudent Rigby atoned for a plebeian origin by the arts

of dependence and a judicious servility, and drew more of the public money from the pay office in half-a-dozen quarter-days than Burke received in all his life. It was not by such arts that Burke rose. When we remember all the untold bitterness of the struggle in which he was engaged, from the time when the old Duke of Newcastle tried to make the Marquis of Rockingham dismiss his new private secretary as an Irish Jesuit in disguise (1765), down to the time when the Duke of Bedford, himself battening "in grants to the house of Russell, so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility," assailed the government for giving Burke a moderate pension, we may almost imagine that if Johnson had imitated the famous Tenth Satire a little later, he would have been tempted to apply the poet's cynical criticism of the career heroic to the greater Cicero of his own day. "I was not," Burke said, in a passage of lofty dignity, "like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled and rocked and dandled into a legislator; *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts, that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts, by imposing on the understandings of the people. At every step of my progress in life, for in every step was I traversed and opposed, and at every turnpike I met I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country, by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws, and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home; otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me."

CHAPTER III.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE.

Foreign observers of our affairs looked upon the state of England between the accession of George III. and the loss of the American colonies (1760–1776), with mixed disgust and satisfaction. Their instinct as absolute rulers was revolted by a spectacle of unbridled faction and raging anarchy; their envy was soothed by the growing weakness of a power which Chatham had so short a time before left at the highest point of grandeur and strength. Frederick the Great spoke with contempt of the insolence of Opposition and the virulence of parties; and vowed that, petty German prince as he was, he would not change places with the King of England. The Emperor Joseph pronounced positively that Great Britain was declining, that Parliament was ruining itself, and that the colonies threatened a catastrophe. Catherine of Russia thought that nothing would restore its ancient vigour to the realm, short of the bracing and heroic remedy of a war. Even at home, such shrewd and experienced onlookers as Horace Walpole suspected that the state of the country was more serious than it had been since the Great Rebellion, and declared it to be approaching by fast strides to some sharp crisis. Men who remembered their Roman history, fancied that they saw every symptom of confusion that preceded the ruin of the Commonwealth, and began to inquire uneasily what

was the temper of the army. Men who remembered the story of the violence and insatiable factiousness of Florence, turned again to Macchiavelli and to Guicciardini, to trace a parallel between the fierce city on the Arno and the fierce city on the Thames. When the King of Sweden, in 1772, carried out a revolution, by abolishing an oligarchic council and assuming the powers of a dictator, with the assent of his people, there were actually serious men in England who thought that the English, after having been guilty of every meanness and corruption, would soon, like the Swedes, own themselves unworthy to be free. The Duke of Richmond, who happened to have a claim to a peerage and an estate in France, excused himself for taking so much pains to establish his claim to them, by gravely asking who knew that a time might not soon come when England would not be worthy living in, and when a retreat to France might be a very happy thing for a free man to have?

The reign had begun by a furious outbreak of hatred between the English and the Scotch. Lord Bute had been driven from office, not merely because he was supposed to owe his power to a scandalous friendship with the King's mother, but because he was accused of crowding the public service with his detested countrymen from the other side of the Tweed. He fell, less from disapproval of his policy than from rude prejudice against his country. The flow of angry emotion had not subsided before the whisper of strife in the American colonies began to trouble the air; and before that had waxed loud, the Middlesex election had blown into a portentous hurricane. This was the first great constitutional case after Burke came into the House of Commons. As, moreover, it became a leading element in the crisis which was the occasion of

Burke's first remarkable essay in the literature of politics, it is as well to go over the facts.

The Parliament to which he had first been returned, now approaching the expiry of its legal term, was dissolved in the spring of 1768. Wilkes, then an outlaw in Paris, returned to England, and announced himself as a candidate for the City. When the election was over, his name stood last on the poll. But his ancient fame as the opponent and victim of the court five years before were revived. After his rejection in the City, he found himself strong enough to stand for the county of Middlesex. Here he was returned at the head of the poll after an excited election. Wilkes had been tried in 1764, and found guilty by the King's Bench of republishing Number Forty-five of the *North Briton*, and of printing and publishing the *Essay on Woman*. He had not appeared to receive sentence, and had been outlawed in consequence. After his election for Middlesex, he obtained a reversal of his outlawry on the point of technical form. He then came up for sentence under the original verdict. The court sent him to prison for twenty-two months, and condemned him to pay a fine of a thousand pounds.

Wilkes was in prison when the second session of the new Parliament began. His case came before the House in November, 1768, on his own petition, accusing Lord Mansfield of altering the record at his trial. After many acrimonious debates and examinations of Wilkes and others at the bar of the House, at length, by 219 votes against 136, the famous motion was passed which expelled him from the House. Another election for Middlesex was now held, and Wilkes was returned without opposition. The day after the return, the House of Commons resolved, by an immense majority, that, having been expelled, Wilkes

was incapable of serving in that Parliament. The following month Wilkes was once more elected. The House once more declared the election void. In April another election took place, and this time the Government put forward Colonel Luttrell, who vacated his seat for Bossiney for the purpose of opposing Wilkes. There was the same result, and for the fourth time Wilkes was at the head of the poll. The House ordered the return to be altered, and after hearing by counsel the freeholders of Middlesex who petitioned against the alteration, finally confirmed it (May 8, 1769) by a majority of 221 to 152. According to Lord Temple, this was the greatest majority ever known on the last day of a session.

The purport and significance of these arbitrary proceedings need little interpretation. The House, according to the authorities, had a constitutional right to expel Wilkes, though the grounds on which even this is defended would probably be questioned if a similar case were to arise in our own day. But a single branch of the legislature could have no power to pass an incapacitating vote either against Wilkes or anybody else. An Act of Parliament is the least instrument by which such incapacity could be imposed. The House might perhaps expel Wilkes, but it could not either legally, or with regard to the less definite limits of constitutional morality, decide whom the Middlesex freeholders should not elect, and it could not therefore set aside their representative, who was then free from any disabling quality. Lord Camden did not much exaggerate, when he declared in a debate on the subject in the House of Lords, that the judgment passed upon the Middlesex election had given the constitution a more dangerous wound than any which were given during the twelve years' absence of Parliament in the reign of Charles I.

The House of Commons was usurping another form of that very dispensing power, for pretending to which the last of the Stuart sovereigns had lost his crown. If the House by a vote could deprive Wilkes of a right to sit, what legal or constitutional impediment would there be in the way, if the majority were at any time disposed to declare all their most formidable opponents in the minority incapable of sitting?

In the same Parliament, there was another and scarcely less remarkable case of Privilege, "that eldest son of Prerogative," as Burke truly called it, "and inheriting all the vices of its parent." Certain printers were accused of breach of privilege for reporting the debates of the House (March, 1771). The messenger of the serjeant-at-arms attempted to take one of them into custody in his own shop in the City. A constable was standing by, designedly, it has been supposed, and Miller, the printer, gave the messenger into his custody for an assault. The case came on before the Lord Mayor, Alderman Wilkes, and Alderman Oliver, the same evening, and the result was that the messenger of the House was committed. The City doctrine was, that if the House of Commons had a serjeant-at-arms, they had a serjeant-at-mace. If the House of Commons could send their citizens to Newgate, they could send its messenger to the Compter. Two other printers were collusively arrested, brought before Wilkes and Oliver, and at once liberated.

The Commons instantly resolved on stern measures. The Lord Mayor and Oliver were taken and dispatched to the Tower, where they lay until the prorogation of Parliament. Wilkes stubbornly refused to pay any attention to repeated summonses to attend at the bar of the House, very properly insisting that he ought to be summoned to

attend *in his place* as member for Middlesex. Besides committing Crosby and Oliver to the Tower, the House summoned the Lord Mayor's clerk to attend with his books, and then and there forced him to strike out the record of the recognisances into which their messenger had entered on being committed at the Mansion House. No Stuart ever did anything more arbitrary and illegal. The House deliberately intended to constitute itself, as Burke had said two years before, an arbitrary and despotic assembly. "The distempers of monarchy were the great subjects of apprehension and redress in the last century. In this, the distempers of Parliament."

Burke, in a speech which he delivered in his place in 1771, warned the House of the evils of the course upon which they were entering, and declared those to be their mortal enemies who would persuade them to act as if they were a self-originated magistracy, independent of the people, and unconnected with their opinions and feelings. But these mortal enemies of its very constitution were at this time the majority of the House. It was to no purpose that Burke argued with more than legal closeness that incapacitation could not be a power according to law, inasmuch as it had neither of the two properties of law: it was not *known*, "you yourself not knowing upon what grounds you will vote the incapacity of any man;" and it was not *fixed*, because it was varied according to the occasion, exercised according to discretion, and no man could call for it as a right. A strain of unanswerable reasoning of this kind counted for nothing, in spite of its being unanswerable. Despotic or oligarchic pretensions are proof against the most formidable battery that reason and experience can construct against them. And Wilkes's exclusion endured until this Parliament—the Unreported Parlia-

ment, as it was called, and in many respects the very worst that ever assembled at Westminster—was dissolved, and a new one elected (1774), when he was once again returned for Middlesex, and took his seat.

The London multitude had grown zealous for Wilkes, and the town had been harassed by disorder. Of the fierce brutality of the crowd of that age, we may form a vivid idea from the unflinching pencil of Hogarth. Barbarous laws were cruelly administered. The common people were turbulent, because misrule made them miserable. Wilkes had written filthy verses, but the crowd cared no more for this than their betters cared about the vices of Lord Sandwich. They made common cause with one who was accidentally a more conspicuous sufferer. Wilkes was quite right when he vowed that he was no Wilkite. The masses were better than their leader. "Whenever the people have a feeling," Burke once said, "they commonly are in the right: they sometimes mistake the physician." Franklin, who was then in London, was of opinion that if George III. had had a bad character, and John Wilkes a good one, the latter might have turned the former out of the kingdom; for the turbulence that began in street riots at one time threatened to end in revolt. The King himself was attacked with savage invective in papers of which it was said, that no one in the previous century would have dared to print any like them until Charles was fast locked up in Carisbrooke Castle.

As is usual when the minds of those in power have been infected with an arbitrary temper, the employment of military force to crush civil disturbances became a familiar and favourite idea. The military, said Lord Weymouth, in an elaborate letter which he addressed to the Surrey magistrates, can never be employed to a more con-

stitutional purpose than in the support of the authority and dignity of the magistracy. If the magistrate should be menaced, he is cautioned not to delay a moment in calling for the aid of the military, and making use of them effectually. The consequence of this bloody scroll, as Wilkes rightly called it, was that shortly afterwards an affray occurred between the crowd and the troops, in which some twenty people were killed and wounded (May 10, 1768). On the following day, the Secretary of War, Lord Barrington, wrote to the commanding officer, informing him that the King highly approved of the conduct both of officers and men, and wished that his gracious approbation of them should be communicated to them.

Burke brought the matter before the House in a motion for a Committee of Inquiry, supported by one of the most lucid and able of his minor speeches. "If ever the time should come," he concluded, "when this House shall be found prompt to execute and slow to inquire; ready to punish the excesses of the people, and slow to listen to their grievances; ready to grant supplies, and slow to examine the account; ready to invest magistrates with large powers, and slow to inquire into the exercise of them; ready to entertain notions of the military power as incorporated with the constitution—when you learn this in the air of St. James's, then the business is done; then the House of Commons will change that character which it receives from the people only." It is hardly necessary to say that his motion for a committee was lost by the overwhelming majority of two hundred and forty-five against thirty. The general result of the proceedings of the government from the accession of George III. to the beginning of the troubles in the American colonies, was in Burke's own words, that the government was at once dreaded and

contemned; that the laws were despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors; that their inaction was a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence; that our dependencies had slackened in their affections; that we knew neither how to yield nor how to enforce; and that disconnection and confusion, in offices, in parties, in families, in Parliament, in the nation, prevailed beyond the disorders of any former time.

It was in the pamphlet on the *Present Discontents*, published in 1770, that Burke dealt at large with the whole scheme of policy of which all these irregularities were the distempered incidents. The pamphlet was composed as a manifesto of the Rockingham section of the Whig party, to show, as Burke wrote to his chief, how different it was in spirit and composition from "the Bedfords, the Grenvilles, and other knots, who are combined for no public purpose, but only as a means of furthering with joint strength their private and individual advantage." The pamphlet was submitted in manuscript or proof to the heads of the party. Friendly critics excused some inelegancies which they thought they found in occasional passages, by taking for granted, as was true, that he had admitted insertions from other hands. Here for the first time he exhibited, on a conspicuous scale, the strongest qualities of his understanding. Contemporaries had an opportunity of measuring this strength, by comparison with another performance of similar scope. The letters of Junius had startled the world the year before. Burke was universally suspected of being their author, and the suspicion never wholly died out so long as he lived. There was no real ground for it beyond the two unconnected facts, that the letters were powerful letters, and that Burke had a powerful intellect. Dr. Johnson admitted that he

had never had a better reason for believing that Burke was Junius, than that he knew nobody else who had the ability of Junius. But Johnson discharged his mind of the thought, at the instant that Burke voluntarily assured him that he neither wrote the letters of Junius nor knew who had written them. The subjects and aim of those famous pieces were not very different from Burke's tract, but any one who in our time turns from the letters to the tract will wonder how the author of the one could ever have been suspected of writing the other. Junius is never more than a railer, and very often he is third-rate even as a railer. The author of the *Present Discontents* speaks without bitterness even of Lord Bute and the Duke of Grafton; he only refers to persons, when their conduct or their situation illustrates a principle. Instead of reviling, he probes, he reflects, he warns; and as the result of this serious method, pursued by a man in whom close mastery of detail kept exact pace with wide grasp of generalities, we have not the ephemeral diatribe of a faction, but one of the monumental pieces of political literature.

The last great pamphlet in the history of English public affairs had been Swift's tract *On the Conduct of the Allies* (1711), in which the writer did a more substantial service for the Tory party of his day than Burke did for the Whig party of a later date. Swift's pamphlet is close, strenuous, persuasive, and full of telling strokes; but nobody need read it to-day, except the historical student, or a member of the Peace Society, in search of the most convincing exposure of the most insane of English wars.[1] There is not a sentence in it which does not belong exclusively to the matter in hand: not a line of that general

[1] This was not Burke's judgment on the long war against Louis XIV. See *Regicide Peace*, i.

wisdom which is for all time. In the *Present Discontents* the method is just the opposite of this. The details are slurred, and they are not literal. Burke describes with excess of elaboration how the new system is a system of double cabinets; one put forward with nominal powers in Parliament, the other concealed behind the throne, and secretly dictating the policy. The reader feels that this is worked out far too closely to be real. It is a structure of artificial rhetoric. But we lightly pass this over, on our way to more solid matter; to the exposition of the principles of a constitution, the right methods of statesmanship, and the defence of party.

It was Bolingbroke, and not Swift, of whom Burke was thinking, when he sat down to the composition of his tract. The *Patriot King* was the fountain of the new doctrines, which Burke trained his party to understand and to resist. If his foe was domestic, it was from a foreign armoury that Burke derived the instruments of resistance. The great fault of political writers is their too close adherence to the forms of the system of state which they happen to be expounding or examining. They stop short at the anatomy of institutions, and do not penetrate to the secret of their functions. An illustrious author in the middle of the eighteenth century introduced his contemporaries to a better way. It is not too much to say that at that epoch the strength of political speculation in this country, from Adam Smith downwards, was drawn from France; and Burke had been led to some of what was most characteristic in his philosophy of society by Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws* (1748), the first great manual of the historic school. We have no space here to work out the relations between Montesquieu's principles and Burke's, but the student of the *Esprit des Lois* will

recognize its influence in every one of Burke's masterpieces.

So far as immediate events were concerned, Burke was quick to discern their true interpretation. As has been already said, he attributed to the King and his party a deliberateness of system which probably had no real existence in their minds. The King intended to reassert the old right of choosing his own ministers. George II. had made strenuous but futile endeavours to the same end. His son, the father of George III., Frederick, Prince of Wales, as every reader of Dodington's Diary will remember, was equally bent on throwing off the yoke of the great Whig combinations, and making his own cabinets. George III. was only continuing the purpose of his father and his grandfather; and there is no reason to believe that he went more elaborately to work to obtain his ends.

It is when he leaves the artifices of a cabal, and strikes down below the surface to the working of deep social forces, that we feel the breadth and power of Burke's method. "I am not one of those," he began, "who think that the people are never wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and in this. But I do say that *in all disputes between them and their rulers, the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people.*" Nay, experience perhaps justifies him in going further. When popular discontents are prevalent, something has generally been found amiss in the constitution or the administration. "The people have no interest in disorder. When they go wrong, it is their error, and not their crime." And then he quotes the famous passage from the Memoirs of Sully, which both practical politicians and political students should bind about their necks, and write upon the tables of their

hearts: "The revolutions that come to pass in great states are not the result of chance, nor of popular caprice. . . . As for the populace, it is never from a passion for attack that it rebels, but from impatience of suffering."

What really gives its distinction to the *Present Discontents* is not its plea for indulgence to popular impatience, nor its plea for the superiority of government by aristocracy, but rather the presence in it of the thought of Montesquieu and his school, of the necessity of studying political phenomena in relation, not merely to forms of government and law, but in relation to whole groups of social facts which give to law and government the spirit that makes them workable. Connected with this, is a particularly wide interpretation and a particularly impressive application of the maxims of expediency, because a wide conception of the various interacting elements of a society naturally extends the considerations which a balance of expediencies will include. Hence, in time, there came a strong and lofty ideal of the true statesman, his breadth of vision, his flexibility of temper, his hardly measurable influence. These are the principal thoughts in the *Discontents* to which that tract owes its permanent interest. "Whatever original energy," says Burke, in one place, "may be supposed either in force or regulation, the operation of both is in truth merely instrumental. Nations are governed by the same methods, and on the same principles, by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or superiors; by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it. . . . The laws reach but a very little way. Constitute Government how you please, infinitely the greater part of it must depend upon the exercise of powers, which are left at large to the prudence and upright-

ness of ministers of state. Even all the use and potency of the laws depends upon them. Without them, your Commonwealth is no better than *a scheme upon paper; and not a living, active, effective constitution.*" Thus early in his public career had Burke seized that great antithesis which he so eloquently laboured in the long and ever memorable episode of his war against the French Revolution: the opposition between artificial arrangements in politics, and a living, active, effective organization, formed by what he calls elsewhere in the present tract, the natural strength of the kingdom, and suitable to the temper and mental habits of the people. When he spoke of the natural strength of the kingdom, he gave no narrow or conventional account of it. He included in the elements of that strength, besides the great peers and the leading landed gentlemen, the opulent merchants and manufacturers, and the substantial yeomanry. Contrasted with the trite versions of government as fixed in King, Lords, and Commons, this search for the real organs of power was going to the root of the matter in a spirit at once thoroughly scientific and thoroughly practical. Burke had, by the speculative training to which he had submitted himself in dealing with Bolingbroke, prepared his mind for a complete grasp of the idea of the body politic as a complex growth, a manifold whole, with closely interdependent relations among its several parts and divisions. It was this conception from which his conservatism sprang. Revolutionary politics have one of their sources in the idea that societies are capable of infinite and immediate modifications, without reference to the deep-rooted conditions that have worked themselves into every part of the social structure.

The same opposition of the positive to the doctrinaire

spirit is to be observed in the remarkable vindication of Party, which fills the last dozen pages of the pamphlet, and which is one of the most courageous of all Burke's deliverances. Party combination is exactly one of those contrivances which, as it might seem, a wise man would accept for working purposes, but about which he would take care to say as little as possible. There appears to be something revolting to the intellectual integrity and self-respect of the individual, in the systematic surrender of his personal action, interest, and power, to a political connexion in which his own judgment may never once be allowed to count for anything. It is like the surrender of the right of private judgment to the authority of the Church, but with its nakedness not concealed by a mystic doctrine. Nothing is more easy to demolish by the bare logical reason. But Burke cared nothing about the bare logical reason, until it had been clothed in convenience and custom, in the affections on one side, and experience on the other. Not content with insisting that for some special purpose of the hour, "when bad men combine, the good must associate," he contended boldly for the merits of fidelity to party combination in itself. Although Burke wrote these strong pages as a reply to Bolingbroke, who had denounced party as an evil, they remain as the best general apology that has ever been offered for that principle of public action, against more philosophic attacks than Bolingbroke's. Burke admitted that when he saw a man acting a desultory and disconnected part in public life with detriment to his fortune, he was ready to believe such a man to be in earnest, though not ready to believe him to be right. In any case he lamented to see rare and valuable qualities squandered away without any public utility. He admitted, moreover, on the other hand, that

people frequently acquired in party confederacies a narrow, bigoted, and proscriptive spirit. "But where duty renders a critical situation a necessary one, it is our business to keep free from the evils attendant upon it, and not to fly from the situation itself. It is surely no very rational account of a man that he has always acted right; but has taken special care to act in such a manner that his endeavours could not possibly be productive of any consequence. . . . When men are not acquainted with each other's principles, nor experienced in each other's talents, nor at all practised in their mutual habitudes and dispositions by joint efforts of business; no personal confidence, no friendship, no common interest subsisting among them; it is evidently impossible that they can act a public part with uniformity, perseverance, or efficacy."

In terms of eloquent eulogy he praised the sacred reverence with which the Romans used to regard the *necessitudo sortis*, or the relations that grew up between men who had only held office together by the casual fortune of the lot. He pointed out to emulation the Whig junto who held so close together in the reign of Anne—Sunderland, Godolphin, Somers, and Marlborough—who believed "that no men could act with effect who did not act in concert; that no men could act in concert who did not act with confidence; and that no men could act with confidence who were not bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests." In reading these energetic passages we have to remember two things: first, that the writer assumes the direct object of party combination to be generous, great, and liberal causes; and, second, that when the time came, and when he believed that his friends were espousing a wrong and pernicious cause, Burke, like Samson bursting asunder the

seven green withes, broke away from the friendships of a life, and deliberately broke his party in pieces.[1]

When Burke came to discuss the cure for the disorders of 1770, he insisted on contenting himself with what he ought to have known to be obviously inadequate prescriptions. And we cannot help feeling that he never speaks of the constitution of the government of this country without gliding into a fallacy identical with that which he himself described and denounced, as thinking better of the wisdom and power of human legislation than in truth it deserved. He was uniformly consistent in his view of the remedies which the various sections of Opposition proposed against the existing debasement and servility of the Lower House. The Duke of Richmond wanted universal suffrage, equal electoral districts, and annual parliaments. Wilkes proposed to disfranchise the rotten boroughs, to increase the county constituencies, and to give members to rich, populous, trading towns—a general policy which was accepted fifty-six years afterwards. The Constitutional Society desired frequent parliaments, the exclusion of placemen from the House, and the increase of the county representation. Burke uniformly refused to give his countenance to any proposals such as these, which involved a clearly organic change in the constitution. He confessed that he had no sort of reliance upon either a triennial parliament or a place-bill, and with that reasonableness which as a rule was fully as remarkable in him as his eloquence, he showed very good grounds for his want of faith in the popular specifics. In truth, triennial or annual parliaments could have done no good, unless the change had been accompanied by the more important process of amputating, as Chatham called it, the rotten boroughs.

[1] See on the same subject, *Corresp.* ii. 276–7.

Of these the Crown could at that time reckon some seventy as its own property. Besides those which belonged to the Crown, there was also the immense number which belonged to the Peerage. If the King sought to strengthen an administration, the thing needful was not to enlist the services of able and distinguished men, but to conciliate a duke, who brought with him the control of a given quantity of voting power in the Lower House. All this patrician influence, which may be found at the bottom of most of the intrigues of the period, would not have been touched by curtailing the duration of parliaments.

What then was the remedy, or had Burke no remedy to offer for these grave distempers of Parliament? Only the remedy of the interposition of the body of the people itself. We must beware of interpreting this phrase in the modern democratic sense. In 1766 he had deliberately declared that he thought it would be more conformable to the spirit of the constitution, "by lessening the number, to add to the weight and independency of our voters." "Considering the immense and dangerous charge of elections, the prostitute and daring venality, the corruption of manners, the idleness and profligacy of the lower sort of voters, no prudent man would propose to increase such an evil."[1] In another place he denies that the people have either enough of speculation in the closet, or of experience in business, to be competent judges, not of the detail of particular measures only, but of *general schemes of policy*.[2] On Burke's theory, the people, as a rule, were no more concerned to interfere with Parliament, than a man is concerned to interfere with somebody whom he has voluntarily and deliberately made his trustee. But here, he con-

[1] *Observations on late State of the Nation*, Works, i. 105, b.

[2] *Speech on Duration of Parliaments.*

fessed, was a shameful and ruinous breach of trust. The ordinary rule of government was being every day mischievously contemned and daringly set aside. Until the confidence thus outraged should be once more restored, then the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. The meetings of counties and corporations ought to settle standards for judging more systematically of the behaviour of those whom they had sent to Parliament. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured. The severest discouragement ought to be given to the pernicious practice of affording a blind and undistinguishing support to every administration. "Parliamentary support comes and goes with office, totally regardless of the man or the merit." For instance, Wilkes's annual motion to expunge the votes upon the Middlesex election had been uniformly rejected, as often as it was made while Lord North was in power. Lord North had no sooner given way to the Rockingham Cabinet, than the House of Commons changed its mind, and the resolutions were expunged by a handsome majority of 115 to 47. Administration was omnipotent in the House, because it could be a man's most efficient friend at an election, and could most amply reward his fidelity afterwards. Against this system Burke called on the nation to set a stern face. Root it up, he kept crying; settle the general course in which you desire members to go; insist that they shall not suffer themselves to be diverted from this by the authority of the government of the day; let lists of votes be published, so that you may ascertain for yourselves whether your trustees have been faithful or fraudulent; do all this, and there will be no need to resort to those organic changes, those empirical innovations,

which may possibly cure, but are much more likely to destroy.

It is not surprising that so halting a policy should have given deep displeasure to very many, perhaps to most, of those whose only common bond was the loose and negative sentiment of antipathy to the court, the ministry, and the too servile majority of the House of Commons. The Constitutional Society was furious. Lord Chatham wrote to Lord Rockingham that the work in which these doctrines first appeared must do much mischief to the common cause. But Burke's view of the constitution was a part of his belief with which he never paltered, and on which he surrendered his judgment to no man. "Our constitution," in his opinion, "stands on a nice equipoise, with steep precipices and deep waters upon all sides of it. In removing it from a dangerous leaning towards one side, there may be a risk of oversetting it on the other."[1] This image was ever before his mind. It occurs again in the last sentence of that great protest against all change and movement, when he describes himself as one who, when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise.[2] When we think of the odious misgovernment in England which the constitution permitted, between the time when Burke wrote and the passing of Lord Sidmouth's Six Acts fifty years later, we may be inclined to class such a constitution among the most inadequate and mischievous political arrangements that any free country has ever had to endure. Yet it was this which Burke declared that he looked upon with filial

[1] *Present Discontents.*

[2] *Reflections on the French Revolution.*

reverence. "Never will I cut it in pieces, and put it into the kettle of any magician, in order to boil it with the puddle of their compounds into youth and vigour; on the contrary, I will drive away such pretenders; I will nurse its venerable age, and with lenient arts extend a parent's breath."

He was filled with the spirit, and he borrowed the arguments, which have always marked the champion of faith and authority against the impious assault of reason or innovation. The constitution was sacred to him as the voice of the Church and the oracles of her saints are sacred to the faithful. Study it, he cried, until you know how to admire it, and if you cannot know and admire, rather believe that you are dull, than that the rest of the world has been imposed upon. We ought to understand it according to our measure, and to venerate where we are not able presently to comprehend. Well has Burke been called the Bossuet of politics.

Although, however, Burke's unflinching reverence for the constitution, and his reluctance to lay a finger upon it, may now seem clearly excessive, as it did to Chatham and his son, who were great men in the right, or to Beckford and Sawbridge, who were very little men in the right, we can only be just to him by comparing his ideas with those which were dominant throughout an evil reign. While he opposed more frequent parliaments, he still upheld the doctrine that "to govern according to the sense, and agreeably to the interests, of the people is a great and glorious object of government." While he declared himself against the addition of a hundred knights of the shire, he in the very same breath protested that, though the people might be deceived in their choice of an object, he "could scarcely conceive any choice they could make, to be so very mischievous as the existence of any human force ca-

pable of resisting it."[1] To us this may seem very mild and commonplace doctrine, but it was not commonplace in an age when Anglican divines — men like Archbishop Markham, Dr. Nowell, or Dr. Porteous — had revived the base precepts of passive obedience and non-resistance, and when such a man as Lord Mansfield encouraged them. And these were the kind of foundations which Burke had been laying, while Fox was yet a Tory, while Sheridan was writing farces, and while Grey was a schoolboy.

It is, however, almost demonstrably certain that the vindication of the supremacy of popular interests over all other considerations would have been bootless toil, and that the great constitutional struggle from 1760 to 1783 would have ended otherwise than it did, but for the failure of the war against the insurgent colonies, and the final establishment of American Independence. It was this portentous transaction which finally routed the arbitrary and despotic pretensions of the House of Commons over the people, and which put an end to the hopes entertained by the sovereign of making his personal will supreme in the Chambers. Fox might well talk of an early Loyalist victory in the war, as the terrible news from Long Island. The struggle which began unsuccessfully at Brentford in Middlesex, was continued at Boston in Massachusetts. The scene had changed, but the conflicting principles were the same. The war of Independence was virtually a second English civil war. The ruin of the American cause would have been also the ruin of the constitutional cause in England; and a patriotic Englishman may revere the memory of Patrick Henry and George Washington not less justly than the patriotic American. Burke's attitude in this great contest is that part of his history about the majestic and noble wisdom of which there can be least dispute.

[1] *To the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Meeting*, 1780.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROCKINGHAM PARTY—PARIS—ELECTION AT BRISTOL—THE AMERICAN WAR.

The war with the American colonies was preceded by an interval of stupor. The violent ferment which had been stirred in the nation by the affairs of Wilkes and the Middlesex election was followed, as Burke said, by as remarkable a deadness and vapidity. In 1770 the distracted ministry of the Duke of Grafton came to an end, and was succeeded by that of Lord North. The King had at last triumphed. He had secured an administration of which the fundamental principle was that the sovereign was to be the virtual head of it, and the real director of its counsels. Lord North's government lasted for twelve years, and its career is for ever associated with one of the most momentous chapters in the history of the English nation and of free institutions.

Through this long and eventful period, Burke's was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He had become important enough for the ministry to think it worth while to take pains to discredit him. They busily encouraged the report that he was Junius, or a close ally to Junius. This was one of the minor vexations of Burke's middle life. Even his friends continued to torment him for incessant disclaimers. Burke's lofty pride made him slow to deal positively with what he scorned as a malicious and

unworthy imputation. To such a friend as Johnson he did not, as we have seen, disdain to volunteer a denial, but Charles Townshend was forced to write more than one importunate letter before he could extract from Burke the definite sentence (Nov. 24, 1771): "I now give you my word and honour that I am not the author of Junius, and that I know not the author of that paper, and I do authorize you to say so." Nor was this the only kind of annoyance to which he was subjected. His rising fame kindled the candour of the friends of his youth. With proverbial good-nature, they admonished him that he did not bear instruction; that he showed such arrogance as in a man of his condition was intolerable; that he snapped furiously at his parliamentary foes, like a wolf who had broken into the fold; that his speeches were useless declamations; and that he disgraced the House by the scurrilities of the bear-garden. These sharp chastenings of friendship Burke endured with the perfect self-command, not of the cold and indifferent egotist, but of one who had trained himself not to expect too much from men. He possessed the true solace for all private chagrins in the activity and the fervour of his public interests.

In 1772 the affairs of the East India Company, and its relations with the Government, had fallen into disorder. The Opposition, though powerless in the Houses of Parliament, were often able to thwart the views of the ministry in the imperial board-room in Leadenhall Street. The Duke of Richmond was as zealous and as active in his opposition to Lord North in the business of the East Indies as he was in the business of the country at Westminster. A proposal was made to Burke to go out to India at the head of a commission of three supervisors, with authority to examine the concerns of every department, and full

powers of control over the company's servants. Though this offer was pressed by the directors, Burke, after anxious consideration, declined it. What his reasons were, there is no evidence; we can only guess that he thought less of his personal interests than of those of the country and of his party. Without him the Rockingham connexion would undoubtedly have fallen to ruin, and with it the most upright, consistent, and disinterested body of men then in public life. "You say," the Duke of Richmond wrote to him (Nov. 15, 1772), "the party is an object of too much importance to go to pieces. Indeed, Burke, you have more merit than any man in keeping us together." It was the character of the party, almost as much as their principles, that secured Burke's zeal and attachment; their decorum, their constancy, their aversion to all cabals for private objects, their indifference to office, except as an instrument of power and a means of carrying out the policy of their convictions. They might easily have had office, if they would have come in upon the King's terms. A year after his fall from power, Lord Rockingham was summoned to the royal closet, and pressed to resume his post. But office at any price was not in their thoughts. They knew the penalties of their system, and they clung to it undeterred. Their patriotism was deliberate and considered. Chalcedon was called the city of the blind, because its founders wilfully neglected the more glorious site of Byzantium which lay under their eyes. "We have built our Chalcedon," said Burke, "with the chosen part of the universe full in our prospect." They had the faults to which an aristocratic party in opposition is naturally liable. Burke used to reproach them with being somewhat languid, scrupulous, and unsystematic. He could not make the Duke of Richmond put off a large party at Goodwood

for the sake of an important division in the House of Lords; and he did not always agree with Lord John Cavendish as to what constitutes a decent and reasonable quantity of fox-hunting for a political leader in a crisis. But it was part of the steadfastness of his whole life to do his best with such materials as he could find; he did not lose patience nor abate his effort, because his friends would miss the opportunity of a great political stroke, rather than they would miss Newmarket Races. He wrote their protests for the House of Lords, composed petitions for county meetings, drafted resolutions, and plied them with information, ideas, admonitions, and exhortations. Never before nor since has our country seen so extraordinary a union of the clever and indefatigable party-manager, with the reflective and philosophic habits of the speculative publicist. It is much easier to make either absolutism or democracy attractive than aristocracy; yet we see how consistent with his deep moral conservatism was Burke's attachment to an aristocratic party, when we read his exhortation to the Duke of Richmond to remember that persons in his high station of life ought to have long views. "You people," he writes to the Duke (November 17, 1772), "of great families and hereditary trusts and fortunes, are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be, by the rapidity of our growth, and even by the fruit we bear, and flatter ourselves that, while we creep on the ground, we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavour, yet still we are but annual plants that perish with our season, and leave no sort of traces behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation. The immediate power of a Duke of Richmond, or a Marquis of Rockingham,

is not so much of moment; but if their conduct and example hand down their principles to their successors, then their houses become the public repositories and office of record for the constitution. . . . I do not look upon your time or lives as lost, if in this sliding away from the genuine spirit of the country, certain parties, if possible—if not, the heads of certain families—should make it their business by the whole course of their lives, principally by their example, to mould into the very vital stamina of their descendants, those principles which ought to be transmitted pure and unmixed to posterity."

Perhaps such a passage as this ought to be described less as reflection than as imagination—moral, historic, conservative imagination—in which order, social continuity, and the endless projection of past into present, and of present into future, are clothed with the sanctity of an inner shrine. We may think that a fox-hunting duke and a racing marquis were very poor centres round which to group these high emotions. But Burke had no puny sentimentalism, and none of the mere literary or romantic conservatism of men like Chateaubriand. He lived in the real world, and not in a false dream of some past world that had never been. He saw that the sporting squires of his party were as much the representatives of ancestral force and quality, as in older days were long lines of Claudii and Valerii. His conservative doctrine was a profound instinct, in part political, but in greater part moral. The accidental roughness of the symbol did not touch him, for the symbol was glorified by the sincerity of his faith and the compass of his imagination.

With these ideas strong within him, in 1773 Burke made a journey to France. It was almost as though the solemn hierophant of some mystic Egyptian temple should

have found himself amid the brilliant chatter of a band of reckless, keen-tongued disputants of the garden or the porch at Athens. His only son had just finished a successful school-course at Westminster, and was now entered a student at Christ Church. He was still too young for the university, and Burke thought that a year could not be more profitably spent than in forming his tongue to foreign languages. The boy was placed at Auxerre, in the house of the business agent of the Bishop of Auxerre. From the Bishop he received many kindnesses, to be amply repaid in after-years when the Bishop came in his old age, an exile and a beggar, to England.

While in Paris, Burke did all that he could to instruct himself as to what was going on in French society. If he had not the dazzling reception which had greeted Hume in 1764, at least he had ample opportunities of acquainting himself with the prevailing ideas of the times, in more than one of the social camps into which Paris was then divided. Madame du Deffand tells the Duchess of Choiseul that though he speaks French extremely ill, everybody felt that he would be infinitely agreeable if he could more easily make himself understood. He followed French well enough as a listener, and went every day to the courts to hear the barristers and watch the procedure. Madame du Deffand showed him all possible attention, and her friends eagerly seconded her. She invited him to supper parties where he met the Count de Broglie, the agent of the king's secret diplomacy; Caraccioli, successor of the nimble-witted Galiani as minister from Naples; and other notabilities of the high world. He supped with the Duchess of Luxembourg, and heard a reading of La Harpe's *Barmecides.* It was high treason in this circle to frequent the rival salon of Mademoiselle Lespinasse, but either the law was relaxed

in the case of foreigners, or else Burke kept his own counsel. Here were for the moment the headquarters of the party of innovation, and here he saw some of the men who were busily forging the thunderbolts. His eye was on the alert, now as always, for anything that might light up the sovereign problems of human government. A book, by a member of this circle, had appeared six months before, which was still the talk of the town, and against which the government had taken the usual impotent measures of repression. This was the *Treatise on Tactics*, by a certain M. de Guibert, a colonel of the Corsican legion. The important part of the work was the introduction, in which the writer examined with what was then thought extraordinary hardihood, the social and political causes of the decline of the military art in France. Burke read it with keen interest and energetic approval. He was present at the reading of a tragedy by the same author, and gave some offence to the rival coterie by preferring Guibert's tragedy to La Harpe's. To us, however, of a later day, Guibert is known neither for his tragedy nor his essay on tactics, nor for a memory so rapid that he could open a book, throw one glance like a flash of lightning on to a page, and then instantly repeat from it half a dozen lines word for word. He lives in literature as the inspirer of that ardent passion of Mademoiselle Lespinasse's letters, so unique in their consuming intensity that, as has been said, they seem to burn the page on which they are written. It was, perhaps, at Mademoiselle Lespinasse's that Burke met Diderot. The eleven volumes of the illustrative plates of the Encyclopædia had been given to the public twelve months before, and its editor was just released from the giant's toil of twenty years. Voltaire was in imperial exile at Ferney. Rousseau was copying music in a garret in the

street which is now called after his name, but he had long ago cut himself off from society; and Burke was not likely to take much trouble to find out a man whom he had known in England seven years before, and against whom he had conceived a strong and lasting antipathy, as entertaining no principle either to influence his heart or to guide his understanding save a deranged and eccentric vanity.

It was the fashion for English visitors to go to Versailles. They saw the dauphin and his brothers dine in public, before a crowd of princes of the blood, nobles, abbés, and all the miscellaneous throng of a court. They attended mass in the chapel, where the old King, surrounded by bishops, sat in a pew just above that of Madame du Barri. The royal mistress astonished foreigners by hair without powder and cheeks without rouge, the simplest toilettes, and the most unassuming manners. Vice itself, in Burke's famous words, seemed to lose half its evil by losing all its grossness. And there, too, Burke had that vision to which we owe one of the most gorgeous pages in our literature—Marie Antoinette, the young dauphiness, "decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in, glittering like the morning-star, full of life and splendour and joy." The shadow was rapidly stealing on. The year after Burke's visit, the scene underwent a strange transformation. The King died; the mistress was banished in luxurious exile; and the dauphiness became the ill-starred Queen of France. Burke never forgot the emotions of the scene; they awoke in his imagination sixteen years after, when all was changed, and the awful contrast shook him with a passion that his eloquence has made immortal.

Madame du Deffand wrote to Horace Walpole that

Burke had been so well received, that he ought to leave France excellently pleased with the country. But it was not so. His spirit was perturbed by what he had listened to. He came away with small esteem for that busy fermentation of intellect in which his French friends most exulted, and for which they looked forward to the gratitude and admiration of posterity. From the spot on which he stood there issued two mighty streams. It was from the ideas of the Parisian Freethinkers whom Burke so detested, that Jefferson, Franklin, and Henry drew those theories of human society which were so soon to find life in American Independence. It was from the same ideas that later on that revolutionary tide surged forth, in which Burke saw no elements of a blessed fertility, but only a horrid torrent of red and desolating lava. In 1773 there was a moment of strange repose in Western Europe, the little break of stillness that precedes the hurricane. It was, indeed, the eve of a momentous epoch. Before sixteen years were over, the American Republic had risen like a new constellation into the firmament, and the French monarchy, of such antiquity and fame and high pre-eminence in European history, had been shattered to the dust. We may not agree with Burke's appreciation of the forces that were behind these vast convulsions. But at least he saw, and saw with eyes of passionate alarm, that strong speculative forces were at work, which must violently prove the very bases of the great social superstructure, and might not improbably break them up for ever.

Almost immediately after his return from France, he sounded a shrill note of warning. Some Methodists from Chatham had petitioned Parliament against a bill for the relief of Dissenters from subscription to the Articles. Burke denounced the intolerance of the petitioners. It is

not the Dissenters, he cried, whom you have to fear, but the men who, "not contented with endeavouring to turn your eyes from the blaze and effulgence of light, by which life and immortality is so gloriously demonstrated by the Gospel, would even extinguish that faint glimmering of Nature, that only comfort supplied to ignorant man before this great illumination. . . . These are the people against whom you ought to aim the shaft of the law; these are the men to whom, arrayed in all the terrors of government, I would say, 'You shall not degrade us into brutes.' . . . The most horrid and cruel blow that can be offered to civil society is through atheism. . . . The infidels are outlaws of the constitution, not of this country, but of the human race. They are never, never to be supported, never to be tolerated. Under the systematic attacks of these people, I see some of the props of good government already begin to fail; I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration. I see myself sinking every day under the attacks of these wretched people."[1] To this pitch he had been excited by the vehement band of men, who had inscribed on their standard *Écraser l'Infame.*

The second Parliament in which Burke had a seat was dissolved suddenly and without warning (October, 1774). The attitude of America was threatening, and it was believed the Ministers were anxious to have the elections over before the state of things became worse. The whole kingdom was instantly in a ferment. Couriers, chaises, post-horses hurried in every direction over the island, and it was noted, as a measure of the agitation, that no fewer than sixty messengers passed through a single turnpike on one day. Sensible observers were glad to think that, in

[1] *Speech on Relief of Protestant Dissenters*, 1773.

consequence of the rapidity of the elections, less wine and money would be wasted than at any election for sixty years past. Burke had a houseful of company at Beaconsfield when the news arrived. Johnson was among them, and as the party was hastily breaking up, the old Tory took his Whig friend kindly by the hand: "Farewell, my dear sir," he said, "and remember that I wish you all the success that ought to be wished to you, and can possibly be wished to you, by an honest man."

The words were of good omen. Burke was now rewarded by the discovery that his labours had earned for him recognition and gratitude beyond the narrow limits of a rather exclusive party. He had before this attracted the attention of the mercantile public. The Company of Merchants trading to Africa voted him their thanks for his share in supporting their establishments. The Committee of Trade at Manchester formally returned him their grateful acknowledgments for the active part that he had taken in the business of the Jamaica free ports. But then Manchester returned no representative to Parliament. In two Parliaments Burke had been elected for Wendover free of expense. Lord Verney's circumstances were now so embarrassed, that he was obliged to part with the four seats at his disposal to men who could pay for them. There had been some talk of proposing Burke for Westminster, and Wilkes, who was then omnipotent, promised him the support of the popular party. But the patriot's memory was treacherous, and he speedily forgot, for reasons of his own, an idea that had originated with himself. Burke's constancy of spirit was momentarily overclouded. "Sometimes when I am alone," he wrote to Lord Rockingham (September 15, 1774), "in spite of all my efforts, I fall into a melancholy which is inexpressible, and to which, if

I gave way, I should not continue long under it, but must totally sink. Yet I do assure you that partly, and indeed principally, by the force of natural good spirits, and partly by a strong sense of what I ought to do, I bear up so well that no one who did not know them could easily discover the state of my mind or my circumstances. I have those that are dear to me, for whom I must live as long as God pleases, and in what way he pleases. Whether I ought not totally to abandon this public station for which I am so unfit, and have of course been so unfortunate, I know not." But he was always saved from rash retirement from public business by two reflections. He doubted whether a man has a right to retire after he has once gone a certain length in these things. And he remembered that there are often obscure vexations in the most private life, which as effectually destroy a man's peace as anything that can occur in public contentions.

Lord Rockingham offered his influence on behalf of Burke at Malton, one of the family boroughs in Yorkshire, and thither Burke in no high spirits betook himself. On his way to the north he heard that he had been nominated for Bristol, but the nomination had, for certain electioneering reasons, not been approved by the party. As it happened, Burke was no sooner chosen at Malton than, owing to an unexpected turn of affairs at Bristol, the idea of proposing him for a candidate revived. Messengers were sent express to his house in London, and, not finding him there, they hastened down to Yorkshire. Burke quickly resolved that the offer was too important to be rejected. Bristol was the capital of the west, and it was still in wealth, population, and mercantile activity the second city of the kingdom. To be invited to stand for so great a constituency, without any request of his own and free of personal ex-

pense, was a distinction which no politician could hold lightly. Burke rose from the table where he was dining with some of his supporters, stepped into a post-chaise at six on a Tuesday evening, and travelled without a break until he reached Bristol on the Thursday afternoon, having got over two hundred and seventy miles in forty-four hours. Not only did he execute the journey without a break, but, as he told the people of Bristol, with an exulting commemoration of his own zeal that recalls Cicero, he did not sleep for an instant in the interval. The poll was kept open for a month, and the contest was the most tedious that had ever been known in the city. New freemen were admitted down to the very last day of the election. At the end of it, Burke was second on the poll, and was declared to be duly chosen (November 3, 1774). There was a petition against his return, but the election was confirmed, and he continued to sit for Bristol for six years.

The situation of a candidate is apt to find out a man's weaker places. Burke stood the test. He showed none of the petulant rage of those clamorous politicians whose flight, as he said, is winged in a lower region of the air. As the traveller stands on the noble bridge that now spans the valley of the Avon, he may recall Burke's local comparison of these busy, angry familiars of an election, to the gulls that skim the mud of the river when it is exhausted of its tide. He gave his new friends a more important lesson, when the time came for him to thank them for the honour which they had just conferred upon him. His colleague had opened the subject of the relations between a member of Parliament and his constituents; and had declared that, for his own part, he should regard the instructions of the people of Bristol as decisive and binding Burke in a weighty passage upheld a manlier doctrine.

"Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect, their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

"My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion, in which one set of men deliberate and another decide, and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments? . . . *Authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest convictions of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our Constitution."[1]

For six years the British electors were content to be represented by a man of this independence. They never, however, really acquiesced in the principle that a member of Parliament owes as much to his own convictions as to the will of his constituents. In 1778 a bill was brought into Parliament, relaxing some of the restrictions imposed upon Ireland by the atrocious fiscal policy of Great Britain. The great mercantile centres raised a furious outcry, and Bristol was as blind and as boisterous as Manchester

[1] *Speech at the conclusion of the Poll.*

and Glasgow. Burke not only spoke and voted in favour of the commercial propositions, but urged that the proposed removal of restrictions on Irish trade did not go nearly far enough. There was none of that too familiar casuistry, by which public men argue themselves out of their consciences in a strange syllogism, that they can best serve the country in Parliament; that to keep their seats they must follow their electors; and that therefore, in the long run, they serve the country best by acquiescing in ignorance and prejudice. Anybody can denounce an abuse. It needs valour and integrity to stand forth against a wrong to which our best friends are most ardently committed. It warms our hearts to think of the noble courage with which Burke faced the blind and vile selfishness of his own supporters. He reminded them that England only consented to leave to the Irish, in two or three instances, the use of the natural faculties which God had given them. He asked them whether Ireland was united to Great Britain for no other purpose than that we should counteract the bounty of Providence in her favour; and whether, in proportion as that bounty had been liberal, we were to regard it as an evil to be met with every possible corrective? In our day there is nobody of any school who doubts that Burke's view of our trade policy towards Ireland was accurately, absolutely, and magnificently right. I need not repeat the arguments. They made no mark on the Bristol merchants. Burke boldly told them that he would rather run the risk of displeasing than of injuring them. They implored him to become their advocate. "I should only disgrace myself," he said; "I should lose the only thing which can make such abilities as mine of any use to the world now or hereafter. I mean that authority which is derived from the opinion that a member speaks the lan-

guage of truth and sincerity, and that he is not ready to take up or lay down a great political system for the convenience of the hour; that he is in Parliament to support his opinion of the public good, and does not form his opinion in order to get into Parliament or to continue in it."[1]

A small instalment of humanity to Ireland was not more distasteful to the electors of Bristol, than a small instalment of toleration to Roman Catholics in England. A measure was passed (1778) repealing certain iniquitous penalties created by an act of William the Third. It is needless to say that this rudimentary concession to justice and sense was supported by Burke. His voters began to believe that those were right who had said that he had been bred at Saint Omer's, was a Papist at heart, and a Jesuit in disguise. When the time came, *summa dies et ineluctabile fatum*, Burke bore with dignity and temper his dismissal from the only independent constituency that he ever represented. Years before he had warned a young man entering public life to regard and wish well to the common people, whom his best instincts and his highest duties lead him to love and to serve, but to put as little trust in them as in princes. Burke somewhere describes an honest public life as carrying on a poor unequal conflict against the passions and prejudices of our day, perhaps with no better weapons than passions and prejudices of our own.

The six years during which Burke sat in Parliament for Bristol saw this conflict carried on under the most desperate circumstances. They were the years of the civil war between the English at home and the English in the American colonies. George III. and Lord North have been made scapegoats for sins which were not exclusively their

[1] *Two letters to gentlemen in Bristol*, 1778.

own. They were only the organs and representatives of all the lurking ignorance and arbitrary humours of the entire community. Burke discloses in many places, that for once the King and Parliament did not act without the sympathies of the mass. In his famous speech at Bristol, in 1780, he was rebuking the intolerance of those who bitterly taunted him for the support of the measure for the relaxation of the Penal Code. "It is but too true," he said in a passage worth remembering, "that the love, and even the very idea, of genuine liberty is extremely rare. It is but too true that there are many whose whole scheme of freedom is made up of pride, perverseness, and insolence. They feel themselves in a state of thraldom; they imagine that their souls are cooped and cabined in, unless they have some man, or some body of men, dependent on their mercy. The desire of having some one below them descends to those who are the very lowest of all; and a Protestant cobbler, debased by his poverty, but exalted by his share of the ruling church, feels a pride in knowing it is by his generosity alone that the peer, whose footman's instep he measures, is able to keep his chaplain from a gaol. This disposition is the true source of the passion which many men, in very humble life, have taken to the American war. *Our* subjects in America; *our* colonies; *our* dependents. This lust of party power is the liberty they hunger and thirst for; and this Siren song of ambition has charmed ears that we would have thought were never organized to that sort of music."

This was the mental attitude of a majority of the nation, and it was fortunate for them and for us that the yeomen and merchants on the other side of the Atlantic had a more just and energetic appreciation of the crisis. The insurgents, while achieving their own freedom, were indi-

rectly engaged in fighting the battle of the people of the mother country as well. Burke had a vehement correspondent who wrote to him (1777) that if the utter ruin of this country were to be the consequence of her persisting in the claim to tax America, then he would be the first to say, *Let her perish!* If England prevails, said Horace Walpole, English and American liberty is at an end; if one fell, the other would fall with it. Burke, seeing this, "certainly never could and never did wish," as he says of himself, "the colonists to be subdued by arms. He was fully persuaded that if such should be the event, they must be held in that subdued state by a great body of standing forces, and perhaps of foreign forces. He was strongly of opinion that such armies, first victorious over Englishmen, in a conflict for English constitutional rights and privileges, and afterwards habituated (though in America) to keep an English people in a state of abject subjection, would prove fatal in the end to the liberties of England itself."[1] The way for this remote peril was being sedulously prepared by a widespread deterioration among popular ideas, and a fatal relaxation of the hold which they had previously gained in the public mind. In order to prove that the Americans had no right to their liberties, we were every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we were obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself. The material strength of the Government, and its moral strength alike, would have been reinforced by the defeat of the colonists, to such an extent as to have seriously delayed or even jeopardized English progress, and therefore that of Europe too. As events actually fell out, the ferocious administra-

[1] *Appeal from the new to the old Whigs.*

tion of the law in the last five or six years of the eighteenth century, was the retribution for the lethargy or approval with which the mass of the English community had watched the measures of the government against their fellow-Englishmen in America.

It is not necessary here to follow Burke minutely through the successive stages of parliamentary action in the American war. He always defended the settlement of 1766; the Stamp Act was repealed, and the constitutional supremacy and sovereign authority of the mother country was preserved in a Declaratory Act. When the project of taxing the colonies was revived, and relations with them were becoming strained and dangerous, Burke came forward with a plan for leaving the General Assemblies of the colonies to grant supplies and aids, instead of giving and granting supplies in Parliament, to be raised and paid in the colonies. Needless to say that it was rejected, and perhaps it was not feasible. Henceforth Burke could only watch in impotence the blunders of government, and the disasters that befell the national arms. But his protests against the war will last as long as our literature.

Of all Burke's writings none are so fit to secure unqualified and unanimous admiration as the three pieces on this momentous struggle: the Speech on American Taxation (April 19, 1774); the Speech on Conciliation with America (March 22, 1775); and the Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol (1777). Together they hardly exceed the compass of the little volume which the reader now has in his hands. It is no exaggeration to say that they compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of public affairs, whether for knowledge or for practice. They are an example without fault of all the qualities which the critic, whether a

theorist or an actor, of great political situations should strive by night and by day to possess. If the subject with which they deal were less near than it is to our interests and affections as free citizens, these three performances would still abound in the lessons of an incomparable political method. If their subject were as remote as the quarrel between the Corinthians and Corcyra, or the war between Rome and the Allies, instead of a conflict to which the world owes the opportunity of the most important of political experiments, we should still have everything to learn from the author's treatment; the vigorous grasp of masses of compressed detail, the wide illumination from great principles of human experience, the strong and masculine feeling for the two great political ends of Justice and Freedom, the large and generous interpretation of expediency, the morality, the vision, the noble temper. If ever, in the fulness of time—and surely the fates of men and literature cannot have it otherwise—Burke becomes one of the half-dozen names of established and universal currency in education and in common books, rising above the waywardness of literary caprice or intellectual fashions, as Shakespere and Milton and Bacon rise above it, it will be the mastery, the elevation, the wisdom, of these far-shining discourses in which the world will in an especial degree recognize the combination of sovereign gifts with beneficent uses.

The pamphlet on the *Present Discontents* is partially obscured or muffled to the modern reader by the space which is given to the cabal of the day. The *Reflections on the French Revolution* over-abounds in declamation, and —apart from its being passionately on one side, and that perhaps the wrong one—the splendour of the eloquence is out of proportion to the reason and the judgment. In the

pieces on the American war, on the contrary, Burke was conscious that he could trust nothing to the sympathy or the prepossessions of his readers, and this put him upon an unwonted persuasiveness. Here it is reason and judgment, not declamation; lucidity, not passion; that produces the effects of eloquence. No choler mars the page; no purple patch distracts our minds from the penetrating force of the argument; no commonplace is dressed up into a vague sublimity. The cause of freedom is made to wear its own proper robe of equity, self-control, and reasonableness.

Not one, but all those great idols of the political market-place whose worship and service has cost the race so dear, are discovered and shown to be the foolish uncouth stocks and stones that they are. Fox once urged members of parliament to peruse the speech on Conciliation again and again, to study it, to imprint it on their minds, to impress it on their hearts. But Fox only referred to the lesson which he thought to be contained in it, that representation is the sovereign remedy for every evil. This is by far the least important of its lessons. It is great in many ways. It is greatest as a remonstrance and an answer against the thriving sophisms of barbarous national pride, the eternal fallacies of war and conquest; and here it is great, as all the three pieces on the subject are so, because they expose with unanswerable force the deep-lying faults of heart and temper, as well as of understanding, which move nations to haughty and violent courses.

The great argument with those of the war party who pretended to a political defence of their position was the doctrine that the English government was sovereign in the colonies as at home; and in the notion of sovereignty they found inherent the notion of an indefeasible right to impose and exact taxes. Having satisfied themselves of the

existence of this sovereignty, and of the right which they took to be its natural property, they saw no step between the existence of an abstract right and the propriety of enforcing it. We have seen an instance of a similar mode of political thinking in our own lifetime. During the great civil war between the Northern and Southern States of the American Union, people in England convinced themselves —some after careful examination of documents, others by cursory glances at second-hand authorities—that the South had a right to secede. The current of opinion was precisely similar in the struggle to which the United States owed their separate existence. Now the idea of a right as a mysterious and reverend abstraction, to be worshipped in a state of naked divorce from expediency and convenience, was one that Burke's political judgment found preposterous and unendurable. He hated the arbitrary and despotic savour which clung about the English assumptions over the colonies. And his repulsion was heightened when he found that these assumptions were justified, not by some permanent advantage which their victory would procure for the mother country or for the colonies, or which would repay the cost of gaining such a victory; not by the assertion and demonstration of some positive duty, but by the futile and meaningless doctrine that we had a right to do something or other, if we liked.

The alleged compromise of the national dignity implied in a withdrawal of the just claim of the government, instead of convincing, only exasperated him. "Show the thing you contend for to be reason; show it to be common-sense; show it to be the means of attaining some useful end; and then I am content to allow it what dignity you please."[1] The next year he took up the ground still

[1] *Speech on American Taxation.*

more firmly, and explained it still more impressively. As for the question of the right of taxation, he exclaimed, "It is less than nothing in my consideration. . . . My consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of Government. . . . *The question with me is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy.* It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I *ought* to do. I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity, and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them." "I am not here going into the distinctions of rights," he cries, "not attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions. *I hate the very sound of them.* This is the true touchstone of all theories which regard man and the affairs of man: does it suit his nature in general? does it suit his nature as modified by his habits?" He could not bear to think of having legislative or political arrangements shaped or vindicated by a delusive geometrical accuracy of deduction, instead of being entrusted to "the natural operation of things, which, left to themselves, generally fall into their proper order."

Apart from his incessant assertion of the principle that man acts from adequate motives relative to his interests, and not on metaphysical speculations, Burke sows, as he marches along in his stately argument, many a germ of the modern philosophy of civilization. He was told that America was worth fighting for. "Certainly it is," he answered, "if fighting a people be the best way of gaining

them." Every step that has been taken in the direction of progress, not merely in empire, but in education, in punishment, in the treatment of the insane, has shown the deep wisdom, so unfamiliar in that age of ferocious penalties and brutal methods, of this truth—that "the natural effect of fidelity, clemency, kindness in governors, is peace, good-will, order, and esteem in the governed." Is there a single instance to the contrary? Then there is that sure key to wise politics: "*Nobody shall persuade me, when a whole people are concerned, that acts of lenity are not means of conciliation.*" And that still more famous sentence, "*I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.*"

Good and observant men will feel that no misty benevolence or vague sympathy, but the positive reality of experience, inspired such passages as that where he says, "Never expecting to find perfection in men, and not looking for divine attributes in created beings, in my commerce with my contemporaries I have found much human virtue. The age unquestionably produces daring profligates and insidious hypocrites? What then? Am I not to avail myself of whatever good is to be found in the world, because of the mixture of evil that is in it! . . . Those who raise suspicions of the good, on account of the behaviour of evil men, are of the party of the latter. . . . A conscientious person would rather doubt his own judgment, than condemn his species. He that accuses all mankind of corruption, ought to remember that he is sure to convict only one. In truth, I should much rather admit those whom at any time I have disrelished the most, to be patterns of perfection, than seek a consolation to my own unworthiness in a general communion of depravity with all about me." This is one of those pieces of rational

constancy and mental wholeness in Burke, which fill up our admiration for him—one of the manifold illustrations of an invincible fidelity to the natural order and operation of things, even when they seemed most hostile to all that was dear to his own personality.

CHAPTER V.

ECONOMICAL REFORM—BURKE IN OFFICE—FALL OF HIS PARTY.

Towards 1780 it began to be clear that the ministers had brought the country into disaster and humiliation, from which their policy contained no way of escape. In the closing months of the American war, the Opposition pressed ministers with a vigour that never abated. Lord North bore their attacks with perfect good-humour. When Burke, in the course of a great oration, parodied Burgoyne's invitation to the Indians to repair to the King's standard, the wit and satire of it almost suffocated the prime minister, not with shame but with laughter. His heart had long ceased to be in the matter, and everybody knew that he only retained his post in obedience to the urgent importunities of the King, whilst such colleagues as Rigby only clung to their place because the salaries were endeared by long familiarity. The general gloom was accidentally deepened by that hideous outbreak of fanaticism and violence, which is known as the Lord George Gordon Riots (June, 1780). The Whigs, as having favoured the relaxation of the laws against popery, were especially obnoxious to the mob. The government sent a guard of soldiers to protect Burke's house in Charles Street, St. James's; but, after he had removed the more important of his papers, he insisted on the guard

being dispatched for the protection of more important places, and he took shelter under the roof of General Burgoyne. His excellent wife, according to a letter of his brother, had "the firmness and sweetness of an angel; but why do I say of an angel?—of a woman." Burke himself courageously walked to and fro amid the raging crowds with firm composure, though the experiment was full of peril. He describes the mob as being made up, as London mobs generally are, rather of the unruly and dissolute than of fanatical malignants, and he vehemently opposed any concessions by Parliament to the spirit of intolerance which had first kindled the blaze. All the letters of the time show that the outrages and alarms of those days and nights, in which the capital seemed to be at the mercy of a furious rabble, made a deeper impression on the minds of contemporaries than they ought to have done. Burke was not likely to be less excited than others by the sight of such insensate disorder; and it is no idle fancy that he had the mobs of 1780 still in his memory, when ten years later he poured out the vials of his wrath on the bloodier mob which carried the King and Queen of France in wild triumph from Versailles to Paris.

In the previous February (1780) Burke had achieved one of the greatest of all his parliamentary and oratorical successes. Though the matter of this particular enterprise is no longer alive, yet it illustrates his many strong qualities in so remarkable a way that it is right to give some account of it. We have already seen that Burke steadily set his face against parliamentary reform; he habitually declared that the machine was well enough to answer any good purpose, provided the materials were sound. The statesman who resists all projects for the

reform of the constitution, and yet eagerly proclaims how deplorably imperfect are the practical results of its working, binds himself to vigorous exertions for the amendment of administration. Burke devoted himself to this duty with a fervid assiduity that has not often been exampled, and has never been surpassed. He went to work with the zeal of a religious enthusiast, intent on purging his church and his faith of the corruptions which lowered it in the eyes of men. There was no part or order of government so obscure, so remote, or so complex, as to escape his acute and persevering observation.

Burke's object, in his schemes for Economical Reform, was less to husband the public resources and relieve the tax-payer—though this aim could not have been absent from his mind, overburdened as England then was with the charges of the American war—than to cut off the channels which supplied the corruption of the House of Commons. The full title of the first project which he presented to the legislature (February, 1780), was A Plan for the Better Security of the Independence of Parliament, and the Economical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments. It was to the former that he deemed the latter to be the most direct road. The strength of the administration in the House was due to the gifts which the Minister had in his hands to dispense. Men voted with the side which could reward their fidelity. It was the number of sinecure places and unpublished pensions which, along with the controllable influence of peers and nabobs, furnished the Minister with an irresistible lever: the avarice and the degraded public spirit of the recipients supplied the required fulcrum. Burke knew that in sweeping away these factitious places and secret pensions, he would be robbing the Court of its chief im-

plements of corruption, and protecting the representative against his chief motive in selling his country. He conceived that he would thus be promoting a far more infallible means than any scheme of electoral reform could have provided, for reviving the integrity and independence of the House of Commons. In his eyes, the evil resided not in the constituencies, but in their representatives; not in the small number of the one, but in the smaller integrity of the other.

The evil did not stop where it began. It was not merely that the sinister motive, thus engendered in the minds of too lax and facile men, induced them to betray their legislative trust, and barter their own uprightness and the interests of the State. The acquisition of one of these nefarious bribes meant much more than a sinister vote. It called into existence a champion of every inveterate abuse that weighed on the resources of the country. There is a well-known passage in the speech on Economical Reform, in which the speaker shows what an insurmountable obstacle Lord Talbot had found in his attempt to carry out certain reforms in the royal household, in the fact that the turnspit of the King's kitchen was a member of Parliament. "On that rock his whole adventure split — his whole scheme of economy was dashed to pieces; his department became more expensive than ever; the Civil List debt accumulated." Interference with the expenses of the household meant interference with the perquisites or fees of this legislative turnspit, and the rights of sinecures were too sacred to be touched. In comparison with them, it counted for nothing that the King's tradesmen went unpaid, and became bankrupt; that the judges were unpaid; that "the justice of the kingdom bent and gave way; the foreign ministers remained inactive and unprovided; the

system of Europe was dissolved; the chain of our alliances was broken; all the wheels of Government at home and abroad were stopped. *The king's turnspit was a member of Parliament.*"[1] This office, and numbers of others exactly like it, existed solely because the House of Commons was crowded with venal men. The post of royal scullion meant a vote that could be relied upon under every circumstance and in all emergencies. And each incumbent of such an office felt his honour and interests concerned in the defence of all other offices of the same scandalous description. There was thus maintained a strong standing army of expensive, lax, and corrupting officials.

The royal household was a gigantic nest of costly jobbery and purposeless profusion. It retained all "the cumbrous charge of a Gothic establishment," though all its usage and accommodation had "shrunk into the polished littleness of modern elegance." The outlay was enormous. The expenditure on the court tables only was a thing unfathomable. Waste was the rule in every branch of it. There was an office for the Great Wardrobe, another office of the Robes, a third of the Groom of the Stole. For these three useless offices there were three useless treasurers. They all laid a heavy burden on the tax-payer, in order to supply a bribe to the member of Parliament. The plain remedy was to annihilate the subordinate treasuries. "Take away," was Burke's demand, "the whole establishment of detail in the household: the Treasurer, the Comptroller, the Cofferer of the Household, the Treasurer of the

[1] The Civil List at this time comprehended a great number of charges, such as those of which Burke speaks, that had nothing to do with the sovereign personally. They were slowly removed, the judicial and diplomatic charges being transferred on the accession of William IV.

Chamber, the Master of the Household, the whole Board of Green Cloth; a vast number of subordinate offices in the department of the Steward of the Household; the whole establishment of the Great Wardrobe; the Removing Wardrobe; the Jewel Office; the Robes; the Board of Works." The abolition of this confused and costly system would not only diminish expense and promote efficiency; it would do still more excellent service in destroying the roots of parliamentary corruption. "Under other governments a question of expense is only a question of economy, and it is nothing more; with us, in every question of expense, there is always a mixture of constitutional considerations."

Places and pensions, though the worst, were not by any means the only stumbling-block in the way of pure and well-ordered government. The administration of the estates of the Crown—the Principality, the Duchy of Cornwall, the Duchy of Lancaster, the County Palatine of Chester—was an elaborate system of obscure and unprofitable expenditure. Wales had to herself eight judges, while no more than twelve sufficed to perform the whole business of justice in England, a country ten times as large, and a hundred times as opulent. Wales, and each of the duchies, had its own exchequer. Every one of these principalities, said Burke, has the apparatus of a kingdom, for the jurisdiction over a few private estates; it has the formality and charge of the Exchequer of Great Britain, for collecting the rents of a country squire. They were the field, in his expressive phrase, of mock jurisdictions and mimic revenues, of difficult trifles and laborious fooleries. "It was but the other day that that pert factious fellow, the Duke of Lancaster, presumed to fly in the face of his liege lord, our gracious sovereign—presumed to go to law with the

King. The object is neither your business nor mine. Which of the parties got the better I really forget. The material point is that the suit cost about 15,000*l.* But as the Duke of Lancaster is but agent of Duke Humphrey, and not worth a groat, our sovereign was obliged to pay the costs of both." The system which involved these costly absurdities, Burke proposed entirely to abolish. In the same spirit he wished to dispose of the Crown lands and the forest lands, which it was for the good of the community, not less than of the Crown itself, to throw into the hands of private owners.

One of the most important of these projected reforms, and one which its author did not flinch from carrying out two years later to his own loss, related to the office of Paymaster. This functionary was accustomed to hold large balances of the public money in his own hands and for his own profit, for long periods, owing to a complex system of accounts which was so rigorous as entirely to defeat its own object. The Paymaster could not, through the multiplicity of forms and the exaction of impossible conditions, get a prompt acquittance. The audit sometimes did not take place for years after the accounts were virtually closed. Meanwhile, the money accumulated in his hands, and its profits were his legitimate perquisite. The first Lord Holland, for example, held the balances of his office from 1765, when he retired, until 1778, when they were audited. During this time he realized, as the interest on the use of these balances, nearly two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Burke diverted these enormous gains into the coffers of the state. He fixed the Paymaster's salary at four thousand pounds a year, and was himself the first person who accepted the curtailed income.

Not the most fervid or brilliant of Burke's pieces, yet

the Speech on Economical Reform is certainly not the least instructive or impressive of them. It gives a suggestive view of the relations existing at that time between the House of Commons and the Court. It reveals the narrow and unpatriotic spirit of the King and the ministers, who could resist proposals so reasonable in themselves, and so remedial in their effects, at a time when the nation was suffering the heavy and distressing burdens of the most disastrous war that our country has ever carried on. It is especially interesting as an illustration of its author's political capacity. At a moment when committees, and petitions, and great county meetings showed how thoroughly the national anger was roused against the existing system, Burke came to the front of affairs with a scheme, of which the most striking characteristic proved to be that it was profoundly temperate. Bent on the extirpation of the system, he had no ill-will towards the men who had happened to flourish in it. "I never will suffer," he said, "any man or description of men to suffer from errors that naturally have grown out of the abusive constitution of those offices which I propose to regulate. If I cannot reform with equity, I will not reform at all." Exasperated as he was by the fruitlessness of his opposition to a policy which he detested from the bottom of his soul, it would have been little wonderful if he had resorted to every weapon of his unrivalled rhetorical armoury, in order to discredit and overthrow the whole scheme of government. Yet nothing could have been further from his mind than any violent or extreme idea of this sort. Many years afterwards he took credit to himself less for what he did on this occasion, than for what he prevented from being done. People were ready for a new modelling of the two Houses of Parliament, as well as for grave modifications of the

Prerogative. Burke resisted this temper unflinchingly. "I had," he says, "a state to preserve, as well as a state to reform. I had a people to gratify, but not to inflame or to mislead." He then recounts without exaggeration the pains and caution with which he sought reform, while steering clear of innovation. He heaved the lead every inch of way he made. It is grievous to think that a man who could assume such an attitude at such a time, who could give this kind of proof of his skill in the great, the difficult, art of governing, only held a fifth-rate office for some time less than a twelvemonth.

The year of the project of Economic Reform (1780) is usually taken as the date when Burke's influence and repute were at their height. He had not been tried in the fire of official responsibility, and his impetuosity was still under a degree of control which not long afterwards was fatally weakened by an over-mastering irritability of constitution. High as his character was now in the ascendant, it was in the same year that Burke suffered the sharp mortification of losing his seat at Bristol. His speech before the election is one of the best known of all his performances; and it well deserves to be so, for it is surpassed by none in gravity, elevation, and moral dignity. We can only wonder that a constituency which could suffer itself to be addressed on this high level should have allowed the small selfishness of local interest to weigh against such wisdom and nobility. But Burke soon found in the course of his canvas that he had no chance, and he declined to go to the poll. On the previous day one of his competitors had fallen down dead. "*What shadows we are,*" said Burke, "*and what shadows we pursue!*"

In 1782 Lord North's government came to an end, and the King "was pleased," as Lord North quoted with jest-

ing irony from the Gazette, to send for Lord Rockingham, Charles Fox, and Lord Shelburne. Members could hardly believe their own eyes, as they saw Lord North and the members of a government which had been in place for twelve years, now lounging on the opposition benches in their great-coats, frocks, and boots, while Fox and Burke shone in the full dress that was then worn by ministers, and cut unwonted figures with swords, lace, and hair powder. Sheridan was made an under-secretary of state, and to the younger Pitt was offered his choice of various minor posts, which he haughtily refused. Burke, to whom on their own admission the party owed everything, was appointed Paymaster of the Forces, with a salary of four thousand pounds a year. His brother, Richard Burke, was made Secretary of the Treasury. His son, Richard, was named to be his father's deputy at the Pay Office, with a salary of five hundred pounds a year.

This singular exclusion from cabinet office of the most powerful genius of the party has naturally given rise to abundant criticism ever since. It will be convenient to say what there is to be said on this subject, in connexion with the events of 1788 (below, p. 136), because there happens to exist some useful information about the ministerial crisis of that year, which sheds a clearer light upon the arrangements of six years before. Meanwhile it is enough to say that Burke himself had most reasonably looked to some higher post. There is the distinct note of the humility of mortified pride in a letter written in reply to some one who had applied to him for a place. "You have been misinformed," he says; "I make no part of the ministerial arrangement. Something in the official line may possibly be thought fit for my measure." Burke knew that his position in the country entitled him to

something above the official line. In a later year, when he felt himself called upon to defend his pension, he described what his position was in the momentous crisis from 1780 to 1782, and Burke's habitual veraciousness forbids us to treat the description as in any way exaggerated. "By what accident it matters not," he says, "nor upon what desert, but just then, and in the midst of that hunt of obloquy which has ever pursued me with a full cry through life, I had obtained a very full degree of public confidence. . . . Nothing to prevent disorder was omitted; when it appeared, nothing to subdue it was left uncounselled nor unexecuted, as far as I could prevail. At the time I speak of, and having a momentary lead, so aided and so encouraged, and as a feeble instrument in a mighty hand—I do not say I saved my country—I am sure I did my country important service. There were few indeed that did not at that time acknowledge it—and that time was thirteen years ago. It was but one view, that no man in the kingdom better deserved an honourable provision should be made for him."[1]

We have seen that Burke had fixed the Paymaster's salary at four thousand pounds, and had destroyed the extravagant perquisites. The other economical reforms which were actually effected fell short by a long way of those which Burke had so industriously devised and so forcibly recommended. In 1782, while Burke declined to spare his own office, the chief of the cabinet conferred upon Barré a pension of over three thousand a year; above ten times the amount, as has been said, which, in Lord Rockingham's own judgment, as expressed in the new Bill, ought henceforth to be granted to any one person whatever. This shortcoming, however, does not detract from

[1] *Letter to a Noble Lord.*

Burke's merit. He was not responsible for it. The eloquence, ingenuity, diligence, above all, the sagacity and the justice of this great effort of 1780, are none the less worthy of our admiration and regard because, in 1782, his chiefs, partly perhaps out of a newborn deference for the feelings of their royal master, showed that the possession of office had sensibly cooled the ardent aspirations proper to Opposition.

The events of the twenty months between the resignation of Lord North (1782) and the accession of Pitt to the office of Prime Minister (December, 1783) mark an important crisis in political history, and they mark an important crisis in Burke's career and hopes. Lord Rockingham had just been three months in office when he died (July, 1782). This dissolved the bond that held the two sections of the ministry together, and let loose a flood of rival ambitions and sharp animosities. Lord Shelburne believed himself to have an irresistible claim to the chief post in the administration; among other reasons, because he might have had it before Lord Rockingham three months earlier, if he had so chosen. The King supported him, not from any partiality to his person, but because he dreaded and hated Charles Fox. The character of Shelburne is one of the perplexities of the time. His views on peace and free trade make him one of the precursors of the Manchester School. No minister was so well informed as to the threads of policy in foreign countries. He was the intimate or the patron of men who now stand out as among the first lights of that time—of Morellet, of Priestley, of Bentham. Yet a few months of power seem to have disclosed faults of character which left him without a single political friend, and blighted him with irreparable discredit. Fox, who was now the head of the Rock-

ingham section of the Whigs, had, before the death of the late premier, been on the point of refusing to serve any longer with Lord Shelburne, and he now very promptly refused to serve under him. When Parliament met after Rockingham's death, gossips noticed that Fox and Burke continued, long after the Speaker had taken the chair, to walk backwards and forwards in the Court of Requests, engaged in earnest conversation. According to one story, Burke was very reluctant to abandon an office whose emoluments were as convenient to him as to his spendthrift colleague. According to another and more probable legend, it was Burke who hurried the rupture, and stimulated Fox's jealousy of Shelburne. The Duke of Richmond disapproved of the secession, and remained in the government. Sheridan also disapproved, but he sacrificed his personal conviction to loyalty to Fox.

If Burke was responsible for the break-up of the government, then he was the instigator of a blunder that must be pronounced not only disastrous but culpable. It lowered the legitimate spirit of party to the nameless spirit of faction. The dangers from which the old liberties of the realm had just emerged have been described by no one so forcibly as by Burke himself. No one was so convinced as Burke that the only way of withstanding the arbitrary and corrupting policy of the Court was to form a strong Whig party. No one knew better than he the sovereign importance and the immense difficulty of repairing the ruin of the last twelve years by a good peace. The Rockingham or Foxite section were obviously unable to form an effective party with serious expectation of power, unless they had allies. They might, no doubt, from personal dislike to Lord Shelburne, refuse to work under him; but personal dislike could be no excuse for formally and

violently working against him, when his policy was their own, and when its success was recognized by them no less than by him as of urgent moment. Instead of either working with the other section of their party, or of supporting from below the gangway that which was the policy of both sections, they sought to return to power by coalescing with the very man whose criminal subservience to the King's will had brought about the catastrophe that Shelburne was repairing. Burke must share the blame of this famous transaction. He was one of the most furious assailants of the new ministry. He poured out a fresh invective against Lord Shelburne every day. Cynical contemporaries laughed as they saw him in search of more and more humiliating parallels, ransacking all literature from the Bible and the Roman history down to Mother Goose's tales. His passion carried him so far as to breed a reaction in those who listened to him. "I think," wrote Mason from Yorkshire, where Burke had been on a visit to Lord Fitzwilliam in the autumn of 1782, "that Burke's mad obloquy against Lord Shelburne, and these insolent pamphlets in which he must have had a hand, will do more to fix him (Shelburne) in his office than anything else."

This result would have actually followed, for the nation was ill pleased at the immoral alliance between the Foxites and the man whom, if they had been true to their opinions a thousand times repeated, they ought at that moment to have been impeaching. The Dissenters, who had hitherto been his enthusiastic admirers, but who are rigid above other men in their demand of political consistency, lamented Burke's fall in joining the Coalition, as Priestley told him many years after, as the fall of a friend and a brother. But Shelburne threw away the game.

"His falsehoods," says Horace Walpole, "his flatteries, duplicity, insincerity, arrogance, contradictions, neglect of his friends, with all the kindred of all these faults, were the daily topics of contempt and ridicule; and his folly shut his eyes, nor did he perceive that so very rapid a fall must have been owing to his own incapacity." This is the testimony of a hostile witness. It is borne out, however, by a circumstance of striking significance. When the King recovered the reins at the end of 1783, not only did he send for Pitt instead of for Shelburne, but Pitt himself neither invited Shelburne to join him, nor in any way ever consulted him then or afterwards, though he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in Shelburne's own administration.

Whatever the causes may have been, the administration fell in the spring of 1783. It was succeeded by the memorable ministry of the Coalition, in which Fox and Lord North divided the real power under the nominal lead of the Duke of Portland. Members saw Lord North squeezed up on the Treasury bench between two men who had a year before been daily menacing him with the axe and the block; and it was not North whom they blamed, but Burke and Fox. Burke had returned to the Pay Office. His first act there was unfortunate. He restored to their position two clerks who had been suspended for malversation, and against whom proceedings were then pending. When attacked for this in the House, he showed an irritation which would have carried him to gross lengths, if Fox and Sheridan had not by main force pulled him down into his seat by the tails of his coat. The restoration of the clerks was an indefensible error of judgment, and its indiscretion was heightened by the kind of defence which Burke tried to set up. When we wonder at Burke's ex-

clusion from great offices, this case of Powell and Bembridge should not be forgotten.

The decisive event in the history of the Coalition Government was the India Bill. The Reports of the various select committees upon Indian affairs—the most important of them all, the ninth and eleventh, having been drawn up by Burke himself—had shown conclusively that the existing system of government was thoroughly corrupt and thoroughly inadequate. It is ascertained pretty conclusively that the bill for replacing that system was conceived and drawn by Burke, and that to him belongs whatever merit or demerit it might possess. It was Burke who infected Fox with his own ardour, and then, as Moore justly says, the self-kindling power of Fox's eloquence threw such fire into his defence of the measure, that he forgot, and his hearers never found out, that his views were not originally and spontaneously his own. The novelty on which the great stress of discussion was laid, was that the bill withdrew power from the Board of Directors, and vested the government for four years in a commission of seven persons named in the bill, and not removable by the House.

Burke was so convinced of the incurable iniquity of the Company, so persuaded that it was not only full of abuses, but, as he said, one of the most corrupt and destructive tyrannies that probably ever existed in the world, as to be content with nothing short of the absolute deprivation of its power. He avowed himself no lover of names, and that he only contended for good government, from whatever quarter it might come. But the idea of good government coming from the Company he declared to be desperate and untenable. This intense animosity, which, considering his long and close familiarity with the infamies of the rule of the Company's servants, was not un-

natural, must be allowed, however, to have blinded him to the grave objections which really existed to his scheme. In the first place, the Bill was indisputably inconsistent with the spirit of his revered Constitution. For the legislature to assume the power of naming the members of an executive body, was an extraordinary and mischievous innovation. Then, to put patronage, which has been estimated by a sober authority at about three hundred thousand pounds a year, into the hands of the House of Commons, was still more mischievous and still less justifiable. Worst of all, from the point of view of the projectors themselves, after a certain time the nomination of the Commissioners would fall to the Crown, and this might in certain contingencies increase to a most dangerous extent the ascendancy of the royal authority. If Burke's measure had been carried, moreover, the patronage would have been transferred to a body much less competent than the Directors to judge of the qualities required in the fulfilment of this or that administrative charge. Indian promotion would have followed parliamentary and party interest. In the hands of the Directors there was at least a partial security, in their professional knowledge, and their personal interest in the success of their government, that places would not be given away on irrelevant considerations. Their system, with all its faults, insured the acquisition of a certain considerable competency in administration, before a servant reached an elevation at which he could do much harm.

Burke defended the bill (December 1, 1783) in one of the speeches which rank only below his greatest, and it contains two or three passages of unsurpassed energy and impressiveness. Everybody knows the fine page about Fox as the descendant of Henry IV. of France, and the happy quotation from Silius Italicus. Every book of Brit-

ish eloquence contains the magnificent description of the young magistrates who undertake the government and the spoliation of India; how, "animated with all the avarice of age and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another, wave after wave; and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and of passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting." How they return home laden with spoil; "their prey is lodged in England; and the cries of India are given to seas and winds, to be blown about, in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean." How in India all the vices operate by which sudden fortune is acquired; while in England are often displayed by the same person the virtues which dispense hereditary wealth, so that "here the manufacturer and the husbandman will bless the just and punctual hand that in India has torn the cloth from the loom, or wrested the scanty portion of rice and salt from the peasant of Bengal, or wrung from him the very opium in which he forgot his oppression and his oppressors."

No degree of eloquence, however, could avail to repair faults alike in structure and in tactics. The whole design was a masterpiece of hardihood, miscalculation, and mismanagement. The combination of interests against the bill was instant, and it was indeed formidable. The great army of returned nabobs, of directors, of proprietors of East India stock, rose up in all its immense force. Every member of every corporation that enjoyed privilege by charter felt the attack on the Company as if it had been a blow directed against himself. The general public had no particular passion for purity or good government, and the best portion of the public was disgusted with the

Coalition. The King saw his chance. With politic audacity he put so strong a personal pressure on the peers, that they threw out the Bill (December, 1783). It was to no purpose that Fox compared the lords to the Janissaries of a Turkish Sultan, and the King's letter to Temple to the rescript in which Tiberius ordered the upright Sejanus to be destroyed. Ministers were dismissed, the young Pitt was installed in their place, and the Whigs were ruined. As a party, they had a few months of office after Pitt's death, but they were excluded from power for half a century.

CHAPTER VI.

BURKE AND HIS FRIENDS.

THOUGH Burke had, at a critical period of his life, definitely abandoned the career of letters, he never withdrew from close intimacy with the groups who still live for us in the pages of Boswell, as no other literary group in our history lives. Goldsmith's famous lines in *Retaliation* show how they all deplored that he should to party give up what was meant for mankind. They often told one another that Edmund Burke was the man whose genius pointed him out as the triumphant champion of faith and sound philosophy against deism, atheism, and David Hume. They loved to see him, as Goldsmith said, wind into his subject like a serpent. Everybody felt at the Literary Club that he had no superior in knowledge, and in colloquial dialectics only one equal. Garrick was there, and of all the names of the time he is the man whom one would perhaps most willingly have seen, because the gifts which threw not only Englishmen, but Frenchmen like Diderot, and Germans like Lichtenberg, into amazement and ecstasy, are exactly those gifts which literary description can do least to reproduce. Burke was one of his strongest admirers, and there was no more zealous attendant at the closing series of performances in which the great monarch of the stage abdicated his throne. In the last pages that he wrote, Burke refers to his ever dear

friend Garrick, dead nearly twenty years before, as the first of actors, because he was the acutest observer of nature that he had ever known.

Among men who pass for being more serious than players, Robertson was often in London society, and he attracted Burke by his largeness and breadth. He sent a copy of his history of America, and Burke thanked him with many stately compliments for having employed philosophy to judge of manners, and from manners having drawn new resources of philosophy. Gibbon was there, but the bystanders felt what was too crudely expressed by Mackintosh, that Gibbon might have been taken from a corner of Burke's mind without ever being missed. Though Burke and Gibbon constantly met, it is not likely that, until the Revolution, there was much intimacy between them, in spite of the respect which each of them might well have had for the vast knowledge of the other. When the *Decline and Fall* was published, Burke read it as everybody else did; but he told Reynolds that he disliked the style, as very affected, mere frippery and tinsel. Sir Joshua himself was neither a man of letters nor a keen politician; but he was full of literary ideas and interests, and he was among Burke's warmest and most constant friends, following him with an admiration and reverence that even Johnson sometimes thought excessive. The reader of Reynolds's famous Discourses will probably share the wonder of his contemporaries, that a man whose time was so absorbed in the practice of his art should have proved himself so excellent a master in the expression of some of its principles. Burke was commonly credited with a large share in their composition, but the evidence goes no further than that Reynolds used to talk them over with him. The friendship between the pair was full and

unalloyed. What Burke admired in the great artist was his sense and his morals, no less than his genius; and to a man of his fervid and excitable temper there was the most attractive of all charms in Sir Joshua's placidity, gentleness, evenness, and the habit, as one of his friends described it, of being the same all the year round. When Reynolds died in 1792, he appointed Burke one of his executors, and left him a legacy of two thousand pounds, besides cancelling a bond of the same amount.

Johnson, however, is the only member of that illustrious company who can profitably be compared with Burke in strength and impressiveness of personality, in a large sensibility at once serious and genial, in brooding care for all the fulness of human life. This striking pair were the two complements of a single noble and solid type, holding tenaciously, in a century of dissolvent speculation, to the best ideas of a society that was slowly passing. They were powerless to hinder the inevitable transformation. One of them did not even dimly foresee it. But both of them help us to understand how manliness and reverence, strength and tenderness, love of truth and pity for man, all flourished under old institutions and old ways of thinking, into which the forces of the time were even then silently breathing a new spirit. The friendship between Burke and Johnson lasted as long as they lived; and if we remember that Johnson was a strong Tory, and declared that the first Whig was the devil, and habitually talked about cursed Whigs and bottomless Whigs, it is an extraordinary fact that his relations with the greatest Whig writer and politician of his day were marked by a cordiality, respect, and admiration that never varied nor wavered. "Burke," he said in a well-known passage, "is such a man that if you met him for the first time in the

street, where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that, when you parted, you would say, This is an extraordinary man. He is never what we would call humdrum; never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off." That Burke was as good a listener as he was a talker, Johnson never would allow. "So desirous is he to talk," he said, "that if one is talking at this end of the table, he'll talk to somebody at the other end." Johnson was far too good a critic, and too honest a man, to assent to a remark of Robertson's, that Burke had wit. "No, sir," said the sage, most truly, "he never succeeds there. 'Tis low, 'tis conceit." Wit apart, he described Burke as the only man whose common conversation corresponded to his general fame in the world; take up whatever topic you might please, he was ready to meet you. When Burke found a seat in Parliament, Johnson said, "Now we who know Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." He did not grudge that Burke should be the first man in the House of Commons, for Burke, he said, was always the first man everywhere. Once when he was ill, somebody mentioned Burke's name. Johnson cried out, "That fellow calls forth all my powers; were I to see Burke now it would kill me."

Burke heartily returned this high appreciation. When some flatterer hinted that Johnson had taken more than his right share of the evening's talk, Burke said, "Nay, it is enough for me to have rung the bell for him." Some one else spoke of a successful imitation of Johnson's style. Burke with vehemence denied the success: the performance, he said, had the pomp, but not the force of the original; the nodosities of the oak, but not its strength; the

contortions of the sibyl, but none of the inspiration. When Burke showed the old sage of Bolt Court over his fine house and pleasant gardens at Beaconsfield, *Non invideo equidem*, Johnson said, with placid good-will, *miror magis*. They always parted in the deep and pregnant phrase of a sage of our own day, *except in opinion not disagreeing*. In truth, the explanation of the sympathy between them is not far to seek. We may well believe that Johnson was tacitly alive to the essentially conservative spirit of Burke even in his most Whiggish days. And Burke penetrated the liberality of mind in a Tory, who called out with loud indignation that the Irish were in a most unnatural state, for there the minority prevailed over the majority, and the severity of the persecution exercised by the Protestants of Ireland against the Catholics, exceeded that of the ten historic persecutions of the Christian Church.

The parties at Beaconsfield, and the evenings at the Turk's Head in Gerard Street, were contemporary with the famous days at Holbach's country house at Grandval. When we think of the reckless themes that were so recklessly discussed by Holbach, Diderot, and the rest of that indefatigable band, we feel that, as against the French philosophic party, an English Tory like Johnson and an English Whig like Burke would have found their own differences too minute to be worth considering. If the group from the Turk's Head could have been transported for an afternoon to Grandval, perhaps Johnson would have been the less impatient and disgusted of the two. He had the capacity of the more genial sort of casuist for playing with subjects, even moral subjects, with the freedom, versatility, and ease that are proper to literature. Burke, on the contrary, would not have failed to see, as indeed we know that he did not fail to see, that a social pandemo-

nium was being prepared in this intellectual paradise of open questions, where God and a future life, marriage and the family, every dogma of religion, every prescription of morality, and all those mysteries and pieties of human life which have been sanctified by the reverence of ages, were being busily pulled to pieces, as if they had been toys in the hands of a company of sportive children. Even the *Beggar's Opera* Burke could not endure to hear praised for its wit or its music, because his mind was filled by thought of its misplaced levity, and he only saw the mischief which such a performance tended to do to society. It would be hard to defend his judgment in this particular case, but it serves to show how Burke was never content with the literary point of view, and how ready and vigilant he was for effects more profound than those of formal criticism. It is true that Johnson was sometimes not less austere in condemning a great work of art for its bad morality. The only time when he was really angry with Hannah More was on his finding that she had read *Tom Jones*—that vicious book, he called it; he hardly knew a more corrupt work. Burke's tendency towards severity of moral judgment, however, never impaired the geniality and tenderness of his relations with those whom he loved. Bennet Langton gave Boswell an affecting account of Burke's last interview with Johnson. A few days before the old man's death, Burke and four or five other friends were sitting round his bedside. "Mr. Burke said to him, 'I am afraid, sir, such a number of us may be oppressive to you.' 'No, sir,' said Johnson, 'it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state, indeed, when your company is not a delight to me.' Mr. Burke, in a tremulous voice, expressive of being very tenderly affected, replied, 'My dear sir, you have always been too good to me.' Immediately af-

terwards he went away. This was the last circumstance in the acquaintance of these two eminent men."

One of Burke's strongest political intimacies was only less interesting and significant than his friendship with Johnson. William Dowdeswell had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the short Rockingham administration of 1765. He had no brilliant gifts, but he had what was then thought a profound knowledge both of the principles and details of the administration of the national revenue. He was industrious, steadfast, clear-headed, inexorably upright. "Immersed in the greatest affairs," as Burke said in his epitaph, "he never lost the ancient, native, genuine, English character of a country gentleman." And this was the character in which Burke now and always saw not only the true political barrier against despotism on the one hand and the rabble on the other, but the best moral type of civic virtue. Those who admire Burke, but cannot share his admiration for the country gentleman, will perhaps justify him by the assumption that he clothed his favourite with ideal qualities which ought, even if they did not, to have belonged to that position.

In his own modest imitation and in his own humble scale, he was a pattern of the activity in public duty, the hospitality towards friends, the assiduous protection of neglected worth, which ought to be among the chief virtues of high station. It would perhaps be doubly unsafe to take for granted that many of our readers have both turned over the pages of Crabbe's *Borough*, and carried away in their minds from that moderately affecting poem, the description of Eusebius—

> That pious moralist, that reasoning saint!
> Can I of worth like thine, Eusebius, speak?
> The man is willing, but the muse is weak.

Eusebius is intended for Burke, and the portrait is a literary tribute for more substantial services. When Crabbe came up from his native Aldborough, with three pounds and a case of surgical instruments in his trunk, he fondly believed that a great patron would be found to watch over his transformation from an unsuccessful apothecary into a popular poet. He wrote to Lord North and Lord Shelburne, but they did not answer his letters; booksellers returned his copious manuscripts; the three pounds gradually disappeared; the surgical instruments went to the pawnbroker's; and the poet found himself an outcast on the world, without a friend, without employment, and without bread. He owed money for his lodging, and was on the very eve of being sent to prison, when it occurred to him to write to Burke. It was the moment (1781) when the final struggle with Lord North was at its fiercest, and Burke might have been absolved if, in the stress of conflict, he had neglected a begging-letter. As it was, the manliness and simplicity of Crabbe's application touched him. He immediately made an appointment with the young poet, and convinced himself of his worth. He not only relieved Crabbe's immediate distress with a sum of money that, as we know, came from no affluence of his own, but carried him off to Beaconsfield, installed him there as a member of the family, and took as much pains to find a printer for *The Library* and *The Village*, as if they had been his own poems. In time he persuaded the Bishop of Norwich to admit Crabbe, in spite of his want of a regular qualification, to holy orders. He then commended him to the notice of Lord Chancellor Thurlow. Crabbe found the Tiger less formidable than his terrifying reputation, for Thurlow at their first interview presented him with a hundred-pound note, and afterwards gave him

a living. The living was of no great value, it is true; and it was Burke who, with untiring friendship, succeeded in procuring something like a substantial position for him, by inducing the Duke of Rutland to make the young parson his chaplain. Henceforth Crabbe's career was assured, and he never forgot to revere and bless the man to whose generous hand he owed his deliverance.

Another of Burke's clients, of whom we hardly know whether to say that he is more or less known to our age than Crabbe, is Barry, a painter of disputable eminence. The son of a seafarer at Cork, he had been introduced to Burke in Dublin in 1762, was brought over to England by him, introduced to some kind of employment, and finally sent, with funds provided by the Burkes, to study art on the Continent. It was characteristic of Burke's willingness not only to supply money, but, what is a far rarer form of kindness, to take active trouble, that he should have followed the raw student with long and careful letters of advice upon the proper direction of his studies. For five years Barry was maintained abroad by the Burkes. Most unhappily for himself, he was cursed with an irritable and perverse temper, and he lacked even the elementary arts of conduct. Burke was generous to the end, with that difficult and uncommon kind of generosity which moves independently of gratitude or ingratitude in the receiver.

From his earliest days Burke had been the eager friend of people in distress. While he was still a student at the Temple, or a writer for the booksellers, he picked up a curious creature in the park, in such unpromising circumstances that he could not forbear to take him under his instant protection. This was Joseph Emin, the Armenian, who had come to Europe from India with strange heroic

ideas in his head as to the deliverance of his countrymen. Burke instantly urged him to accept the few shillings that he happened to have in his purse, and seems to have found employment for him as a copyist, until fortune brought other openings to the singular adventurer. For foreign visitors Burke had always a singular considerateness. Two Brahmins came to England as agents of Ragonaut Rao, and at first underwent intolerable things rather from the ignorance than the unkindness of our countrymen. Burke no sooner found out what was passing, than he carried them down to Beaconsfield, and as it was summertime he gave them for their separate use a spacious garden-house, where they were free to prepare their food and perform the rites as their religion prescribed. Nothing was so certain to command his fervid sympathy as strict adherence to the rules and ceremonies of an ancient and sacred ordering.

If he never failed to perform the offices to which we are bound by the common sympathy of men, it is satisfactory to think that Burke in return received a measure of these friendly services. Among those who loved him best was Doctor Brocklesby, the tender physician who watched and soothed the last hours of Johnson. When we remember how Burke's soul was harassed by private cares, chagrined by the untoward course of public events, and mortified by neglect from friends no less than by virulent reproach from foes, it makes us feel very kindly towards Brocklesby, to read what he wrote to Burke in 1788:

My very dear friend,—

My veneration of your public conduct for many years past, and my real affection for your private virtues and transcendent worth, made me yesterday take a liberty with you in a moment's conversation at my house, to make you an instant present of 1000*l.*, which for

years past I had by will destined as a testimony of my regard on my decease. This you modestly desired me not to think of; but I told you what I now repeat, that unfavoured as I have lived for a long life, unnoticed professionally by any party of men, and though unknown at court, I am rich enough to spare to virtue (what others waste in vice) the above sum, and still reserve an annual income greater than I spend. I shall receive at the India House a bill I have discounted for 1000*l* on the 4th of next month, and then shall be happy that you will accept this proof of my sincere love and esteem, and let me add, *Si res ampla domi similisque affectibus esset*, I should be happy to repeat the like every year."

The mere transcription of the friendly man's good letter has something of the effect of an exercise of religion. And it was only one of a series of kind acts on the part of the same generous giver.

It is always interesting in the case of a great man to know how he affected the women of his acquaintance. Women do not usually judge character either so kindly or so soundly as men do, for they lack that knowledge of the ordeals of practical life, which gives both justice and charity to such verdicts. But they are more susceptible than most men are to devotion and nobility in character. The little group of the blue-stockings of the day regarded the great master of knowledge and eloquence with mixed feelings. They felt for Burke the adoring reverence which women offer, with too indiscriminate a trust, to men of commanding power. In his case it was the moral loftiness of his character that inspired them, as much as the splendour of his ability. Of Sheridan or of Fox they could not bear to hear; of Burke they could not hear enough. Hannah More, and Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, the learned translator of Epictetus, and Fanny Burney, the author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, were all proud of his notice, even while they glowed with anger at his sympathy with

American rebels, his unkind words about the King, and his cruel persecution of poor Mr. Hastings. It was at Mrs. Vesey's evening parties, given on the Tuesdays on which the Club dined at the Turk's Head, that he often had long chats with Hannah More. She had to forget what she called his political malefactions, before she could allow herself to admire his high spirits and good-humour. This was after the events of the Coalition, and her Memoirs, like the change in the mind of the Dissenters towards Burke, show what a fall that act of faction was believed to mark in his character. When he was rejected for Bristol, she moralized on the catastrophe by the quaint reflection that Providence has wisely contrived to render all its dispensations equal, by making those talents which set one man so much above another of no esteem in the opinion of those who are without them.

Miss Burney has described her flutter of spirits when she first found herself in company with Burke (1782). It was at Sir Joshua's house on the top of Richmond Hill, and she tells, with her usual effusion, how she was impressed by Burke's noble figure and commanding air, his penetrating and sonorous voice, his eloquent and copious language, the infinite variety and rapidity of his discourse. Burke had something to say on every subject, from bits of personal gossip, up to the sweet and melting landscape that lay in all its beauty before their windows on the terrace. He was playful, serious, fantastic, wise. When they next met, the great man completed his conquest by expressing his admiration of *Evelina*. Gibbon assured her that he had read the whole five volumes in a day; but Burke declared the feat was impossible, for he had himself read it through without interruption, and it had cost him three days. He showed his regard for the authoress in a

more substantial way than by compliments and criticism. His last act, before going out of office, in 1783, was to procure for Dr. Burney the appointment of organist at the chapel of Chelsea.

We have spoken of the dislike of these excellent women for Sheridan and Fox. In Sheridan's case Burke did not much disagree with them. Their characters were as unlike and as antipathetic as those of two men could be; and to antipathy of temperament was probably added a kind of rivalry, which may justly have affected one of them with an irritated humiliation. Sheridan was twenty years younger than Burke, and did not come into Parliament until Burke had fought the prolonged battle of the American war, and had achieved the victory of Economic Reform. Yet Sheridan was immediately taken up by the party, and became the intimate and counsellor of Charles Fox, its leader, and of the Prince of Wales, its patron. That Burke never failed to do full justice to Sheridan's brilliant genius, or to bestow generous and unaffected praise on his oratorical successes, there is ample evidence. He was of far too high and veracious a nature to be capable of the disparaging tricks of a poor jealousy. The humiliation lay in the fact that circumstances had placed Sheridan in a position which made it natural for the world to measure them with one another. Burke could no more like Sheridan than he could like the *Beggar's Opera.* Sheridan had a levity, a want of depth, a laxity, and dispersion of feeling, to which no degree of intellectual brilliancy could reconcile a man of such profound moral energy and social conviction as Burke.

The thought will perhaps occur to the reader that Fox was not less lax than Sheridan, and yet for Fox Burke long had the sincerest friendship. He was dissolute, in-

dolent, irregular, and the most insensate gambler that ever squandered fortune after fortune over the faro-table. It was his vices as much as his politics, that made George III. hate Fox as an English Catiline. How came Burke to accept a man of this character, first for his disciple, then for his friend, and next for his leader? The answer is a simple one. In spite of the disorders of his life, Fox, from the time when his acquaintance with Burke began, down to the time when it came to such disastrous end, and for long years afterwards, was to the bottom of his heart as passionate for freedom, justice, and beneficence as Burke ever was. These great ends were as real, as constant, as overmastering in Fox as they were in Burke. No man was ever more deeply imbued with the generous impulses of great statesmanship, with chivalrous courage, with the magnificent spirit of devotion to high imposing causes. These qualities, we may be sure, and not his power as a debater and as a declaimer, won for him in Burke's heart the admiration which found such splendid expression in a passage, that will remain as a stock piece of declamation for long generations after it was first poured out as a sincere tribute of reverence and affection. Precisians, like Lafayette, might choose to see their patriotic hopes ruined rather than have them saved by Mirabeau, because Mirabeau was a debauchee. Burke's public morality was of stouter stuff, and he loved Fox because he knew that under the stains and blemishes that had been left by a deplorable education was that sterling, inexhaustible ore in which noble sympathies are subtly compounded with resplendent powers.

If he was warmly attached to his political friends, Burke, at least before the Revolution, was usually on fair terms in private life with his political opponents. There

were few men whose policy he disliked more than he disliked the policy of George Grenville. And we have seen that he criticized Grenville in a pamphlet which did not spare him. Yet Grenville and he did not refuse one another's hospitality, and were on the best terms to the very end. Wilberforce, again, was one of the staunchest friends of Pitt, and fought one of the greatest electioneering battles on Pitt's side in the struggle of 1784; but it made no difference in Burke's relations with him. In 1787 a coldness arose between them. Burke had delivered a strong invective against the French Treaty. Wilberforce said, "We can make allowance for the honourable gentleman, because we remember him in better days." The retort greatly nettled Burke, but the feeling soon passed away, and they both found a special satisfaction in the dinner to which Wilberforce invited Burke every session. "He was a great man," says Wilberforce. "I could never understand how at one time he grew to be so entirely neglected."

Outside of both political and literary circles, among Burke's correspondents was that wise and honest traveller whose name is as inseparably bound up with the preparation of the French Revolution, as Burke's is bound up with its sanguinary climax and fulfilment. Arthur Young, by his Farmer's Letters, and Farmer's Calendar, and his account of his travels in the southern counties of England and elsewhere—the story of the more famous travels in France was not published until 1792—had won a reputation as the best-informed agriculturist of his day. Within a year of his settlement at Beaconsfield, we find Burke writing to consult Young on the mysteries of his new occupation. The reader may smile as he recognizes the ardour, the earnestness, the fervid gravity of the political

speeches, in letters which discuss the merits of carrots in fattening porkers, and the precise degree to which they should be boiled. Burke throws himself just as eagerly into white peas and Indian corn, into cabbages that grow into head and cabbages that shoot into leaves, into experiments with pumpkin seed and wild parsnip, as if they had been details of the Stamp Act, or justice to Ireland. When he complains that it is scarcely possible for him, with his numerous avocations, to get his servants to enter fully into his views as to the right treatment of his crops, we can easily understand that his farming did not help him to make money. It is impossible that he should have had time or attention to spare for the effectual direction of even a small farm.

Yet if the farm brought scantier profit than it ought to have brought, it was probably no weak solace in the background of a life of harassing interests and perpetual disappointments. Burke was happier at Beaconsfield than anywhere else, and he was happiest there when his house was full of guests. Nothing pleased him better than to drive a visitor over to Windsor, where he would expatiate with enthusiasm "on the proud Keep, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, overseeing and guarding the subjected land." He delighted to point out the house at Uxbridge where Charles I. had carried on the negotiations with the Parliamentary Commissioners; the beautiful grounds of Bulstrode, where Judge Jefferies had once lived; and the church-yard of Beaconsfield, where lay the remains of Edmund Waller, the poet. He was fond of talking of great statesmen—of Walpole, of Pulteney, and of Chatham. Some one had said that Chatham knew nothing whatever except Spenser's *Faery Queen.* "No

matter how that was said," Burke replied to one of his visitors, "whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read, will have a strong hold of the English language." The delight of the host must have been at least equalled by the delight of the guest in conversation which was thus ever taking new turns, branching into topical surprises, and at all turns and on every topic was luminous, high, edifying, full.

No guest was more welcome than the friend of his boyhood; and Richard Shackleton has told how the friendship, cordiality, and openness with which Burke embraced him was even more than might be expected from long love. The simple Quaker was confused by the sight of what seemed to him so sumptuous and worldly a life, and he went to rest uneasily, doubting whether God's blessing could go with it. But when he awoke on the morrow of his first visit, he told his wife, in the language of his sect, how glad he was "to find no condemnation; but on the contrary, ability to put up fervent petitions with much tenderness on behalf of this great luminary." It is at his country home that we like best to think of Burke. It is still a touching picture to the historic imagination to follow him from the heat and violence of the House, where tipsy squires derided the greatest genius of his time, down to the calm shades of Beaconsfield, where he would with his own hands give food to a starving beggar, or medicine to a peasant sick of the ague; where he would talk of the weather, the turnips, and the hay with the team-men and the farm-bailiff; and where, in the evening stillness, he would pace the walk under the trees, and reflect on the state of Europe and the distractions of his country.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW MINISTRY—WARREN HASTINGS—BURKE'S PUBLIC POSITION.

THE six years which followed the destruction of the Coalition were, in some respects, the most mortifying portion of Burke's troubled career. Pitt was more firmly seated in power than Lord North had ever been, and he used his power to carry out a policy against which it was impossible for the Whigs, on their own principles, to offer an effective resistance. For this is the peculiarity of the King's first victory over the enemies who had done obstinate battle with him for nearly a quarter of a century. He had driven them out of the field, but with the aid of an ally who was as strongly hostile to the royal system as they had ever been. The King had vindicated his right against the Whigs to choose his own ministers; but the new minister was himself a Whig by descent, and a reformer by his education and personal disposition.

Ireland was the subject of the first great battle between the ministry and their opponents. Here, if anywhere, we might have expected from Burke at least his usual wisdom and patience. We saw in a previous chapter (p. 23) what the political condition of Ireland was when Burke went there with Hamilton in 1763. The American war had brought about a great change. The King had shrewdly predicted that if America became free, Ireland would soon

follow the same plan and be a separate state. In fact, along with the American war we had to encounter an Irish war also; but the latter was, as an Irish politician called it at the time, a smothered war. Like the Americans, the Anglo-Irish entered into non-importation compacts, and they interdicted commerce. The Irish volunteers, first forty, then sixty, and at last a hundred thousand strong, were virtually an army enrolled to overawe the English ministry and Parliament. Following the spirit, if not the actual path, of the Americans, they raised a cry for commercial and legislative independence. They were too strong to be resisted, and in 1782 the Irish Parliament acquired the privilege of initiating and conducting its own business, without the sanction or control either of the Privy Council or of the English Parliament. Dazzled by the chance of acquiring legislative independence, they had been content with the comparatively small commercial boons obtained by Lord Nugent and Burke in 1778, and with the removal of further restrictions by the alarmed minister in the following year. After the concession of their independence in 1782, they found that to procure the abolition of the remaining restrictions on their commerce—the right of trade, for instance, with America and Africa—the consent of the English legislature was as necessary as it had ever been. Pitt, fresh from the teaching of Adam Smith and of Shelburne, brought forward in 1785 his famous commercial propositions. The theory of his scheme was that Irish trade should be free, and that Ireland should be admitted to a permanent participation in commercial advantages. In return for this gain, after her hereditary revenue passed a certain point, she was to devote the surplus to purposes, such as the maintenance of the navy, in which the two nations had a common in-

terest. Pitt was to be believed when he declared that, of all the objects of his political life, this was, in his opinion, the most important that he had ever engaged in, and he never expected to meet another that should rouse every emotion in so strong a degree as this.

A furious battle took place in the Irish Parliament. There, while nobody could deny that the eleven propositions would benefit the mercantile interests of the country, it was passionately urged that the last of the propositions, that which concerned the apportionment of Irish revenue to imperial purposes, meant the enslavement of their unhappy island. Their fetters, they went on, were clenched, if the English Government was to be allowed thus to take the initiative in Irish legislation. The factious course pursued by the English Opposition was much less excusable than the line of the Anglo-Irish leaders. Fox, who was ostentatiously ignorant of political economy, led the charge. He insisted that Pitt's measures would annihilate English trade, would destroy the Navigation Laws, and with them would bring our maritime strength to the ground. Having thus won the favour of the English manufacturers, he turned round to the Irish Opposition, and conciliated them by declaring with equal vehemence that the propositions were an insult to Ireland, and a nefarious attempt to tamper with her new-born liberties. Burke followed his leader. We may almost say that for once he allowed his political integrity to be bewildered. In 1778 and 1779 he had firmly resisted the pressure which his mercantile constituents in Bristol had endeavoured to put upon him; he had warmly supported the Irish claims, and had lost his seat in consequence. The precise ground which he took up in 1785 was this. He appears to have discerned in Pitt's proposals the germ

of an attempt to extract revenue from Ireland, identical in purpose, principle, and probable effect with the ever-memorable attempt to extract revenue from the American Colonies. Whatever stress may be laid upon this, we find it hard to vindicate Burke from the charge of factiousness. Nothing can have been more unworthy of him than the sneer at Pitt in the great speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts (1785), for stopping to pick up chaff and straws from the Irish revenue, instead of checking profligate expenditure in India.

Pitt's alternative was irresistible. Situated as Ireland was, she must either be the subservient instrument of English prosperity, or else she must be allowed to enjoy the benefits of English trade, taking at the same time a proportionate share of the common burdens. Adam Smith had shown that there was nothing incompatible with justice in a contribution by Ireland to the public debt of Great Britain. That debt, he argued, had been contracted in support of the government established by the Revolution; a government to which the Protestants of Ireland owed not only the whole authority which they enjoyed in their own country, but every security which they possessed for their liberty, property, and religion. The neighbourhood of Ireland to the shores of the mother country introduced an element into the problem, which must have taught every unimpassioned observer that the American solution would be inadequate for a dependency that lay at our very door. Burke could not, in his calmer moments, have failed to recognize all this. Yet he lent himself to the party cry that Pitt was taking his first measures for the re-enslavement of Ireland. Had it not been for what he himself called the delirium of the preceding session, and which had still not subsided, he would

have seen that Pitt was in truth taking his first measures for the effective deliverance of Ireland from an unjust and oppressive subordination. The same delirium committed him to another equally deplorable perversity, when he opposed, with as many excesses in temper as fallacies in statesmanship, the wise treaty with France, in which Pitt partially anticipated the commercial policy of an ampler treaty three-quarters of a century afterwards.

A great episode in Burke's career now opened. It was in 1785 that Warren Hastings returned from India, after a series of exploits as momentous and far-reaching, for good or evil, as have ever been achieved by any English ruler. For years Burke had been watching India. With rising wonder, amazement, and indignation he had steadily followed that long train of intrigue and crime which had ended in the consolidation of a new empire. With the return of Hastings he felt that the time had come for striking a severe blow and making a signal example. He gave notice (June, 1785) that he would, at a future day, make a motion respecting the conduct of a gentleman just returned from India.

Among minor considerations, we have to remember that Indian affairs entered materially into the great battle of parties. It was upon an Indian bill that the late ministry had made shipwreck. It was notoriously by the aid of potent Indian interests that the new ministry had acquired a portion of its majority. To expose the misdeeds of our agents in India was at once to strike the minister who had dexterously secured their support, and to attack one of the great strongholds of parliamentary corruption. The proceedings against Hastings were, in the first instance, regarded as a sequel to the struggle over Fox's East India Bill. That these considerations were

present in Burke's thought there is no doubt, but they were purely secondary. It was India itself that stood above all else in his imagination. It had filled his mind and absorbed his time while Pitt was still an under-graduate at Cambridge, and Burke was looking forward to match his plan of economic reform with a greater plan of Indian reform. In the Ninth Report, the Eleventh Report, and in his speech on the India Bill of 1783, he had shown both how thoroughly he had mastered the facts, and how profoundly they had stirred his sense of wrong. The masterpiece known as the Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, delivered in Parliament on a motion for papers (1785), handles matters of account, of interest turned into principal, and principal superadded to principal; it deals with a hundred minute technicalities of teeps and tuncaws, of gomastahs and soucaring; all with such a suffusion of interest and colour, with such nobility of idea and expression, as could only have come from the addition to genius of a deep morality of nature and an overwhelming force of conviction. A space less than one of these pages contains such a picture of the devastation of the Carnatic by Hyder Ali as may fill the young orator or the young writer with the same emotions of enthusiasm, emulation, and despair that torment the artist who first gazes on the Madonna at Dresden, or the figures of Night and Dawn and the Penseroso at Florence. The despair is only too well founded. No conscious study could pierce the secret of that just and pathetic transition from the havoc of Hyder Ali to the healing duties of a virtuous government, to the consolatory celebration of the mysteries of justice and humanity, to the warning to the unlawful creditors to silence their inauspicious tongues in presence of the holy work of restoration, to the generous proclamation against

them that in every country the first creditor is the plough. The emotions which make the hidden force of such pictures come not by observation. They grow from the sedulous meditation of long years, directed by a powerful intellect and inspired by an interest in human well-being, which of its own virtue bore the orator into the sustaining air of the upper gods. Concentrated passion and exhaustive knowledge have never entered into a more formidable combination. Yet, when Burke made his speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, Pitt and Grenville consulted together whether it was worth answering, and came to the conclusion that they need not take the trouble.

Neither the scornful neglect of his opponents, nor the dissuasions of some who sat on his own side, could check the ardour with which Burke pressed on, as he said, to the relief of afflicted nations. The fact is, that Burke was not at all a philanthropist as Clarkson and Wilberforce were philanthropists. His sympathy was too strongly under the control of true political reason. In 1780, for instance, the slave-trade had attracted his attention, and he had even proceeded to sketch out a code of regulations which provided for its immediate mitigation and ultimate suppression. After mature consideration he abandoned the attempt, from the conviction that the strength of the West India interest would defeat the utmost efforts of his party. And he was quite right in refusing to hope from any political action what could only be effected after the moral preparation of the bulk of the nation. And *direct* moral or philanthropic apostleship was not his function.

Macaulay, in a famous passage of dazzling lustre and fine historic colour, describes Burke's holy rage against the misdeeds of Hastings as due to his sensibility. But sensibility to what? Not merely to those common impressions

of human suffering which kindle the flame of ordinary philanthropy, always attractive, often so beneficent, but often so capricious and so laden with secret detriment. This was no part of Burke's type. Nor is it enough to say that Burke had what is the distinctive mark of the true statesman—a passion for good, wise, and orderly government. He had that in the strongest degree. All that wore the look of confusion he held in abhorrence, and he detected the seeds of confusion with a penetration that made other men marvel. He was far too wise a man to have any sympathy with the energetic exercise of power for power's sake. He knew well that triumphs of violence are for the most part little better than temporary makeshifts, which leave all the work of government to be encountered afterwards by men of essentially greater capacity than the hero of force without scruple. But he regarded those whom he called the great bad men of the old stamp, Cromwell, Richelieu, the Guises, the Condés, with a certain tolerance, because "though the virtues of such men were not to be taken as a balance to their crimes, yet they had long views, and sanctified their ambition by aiming at the orderly rule, and not the destruction of their country." What he valued was the deep-seated order of systems that worked by the accepted uses, opinions, beliefs, prejudices of a community.

This love of right and stable order was not all. That was itself the growth from a deeper root, partly of conviction and partly of sympathy; the conviction of the rare and difficult conjunctures of circumstance which are needed for the formation of even the rudest forms of social union among mankind; and then the sympathy that the best men must always find it hard to withhold from any hoary fabric of belief, and any venerated system of gov-

ernment, that has cherished a certain order, and shed even a ray of the faintest dawn, among the violences and the darkness of the race. It was reverence rather than sensibility, a noble and philosophic conservatism rather than philanthropy, which raised that storm in Burke's breast against the rapacity of English adventurers in India, and the imperial crimes of Hastings. Exactly the same tide of emotion which afterwards filled to the brim the cup of prophetic anger against the desecrators of the church and the monarchy of France, now poured itself out against those who in India had "tossed about, subverted and tore to pieces, as if it were in the gambols of boyish unluckiness and malice, the most established rights, and the most ancient and most revered institutions of ages and nations." From beginning to end of the fourteen years in which Burke pursued his campaign against Hastings, we see in every page that the India which ever glowed before his vision was not the home of picturesque usages and melodramatic costume, but rather, in his own words, the land of princes once of great dignity, authority, and opulence; of an ancient and venerable priesthood, the guides of the people while living, and their consolation in death; of a nobility of antiquity and renown; of millions of ingenious mechanics, and millions of diligent tillers of the earth; and finally, the land where might be found almost all the religions professed by men — the Brahminical, the Mussulman, the Eastern and the Western Christian. When he published his speech on the Nabob of Arcot, Burke prefixed to it an admirable quotation from one of the letters of the Emperor Julian. And Julian too, as we all know, had a strong feeling for the past. But what in that remarkable figure was only the sentimentalism of reaction, in Burke was a reasoned and philosophic veneration for all

old and settled order, whether in the free Parliament of Great Britain, in the ancient absolutism of Versailles, or in the secular pomp of Oude, and the inviolable sanctity of Benares, the holy city and the garden of God.

It would be out of place here to attempt to follow the details of the impeachment. Every reader has heard that great tale in our history, and everybody knows that it was Burke's tenacity and power which caused that tale to be told. The House of Commons would not, it is true, have directed that Hastings should be impeached, unless Pitt had given his sanction and approval, and how it was that Pitt did give his sanction and approval so suddenly and on grounds ostensibly so slender, remains one of the secrets of history. In no case would the impeachment have been pressed upon Parliament by the Opposition, and assented to by ministers, if Burke had not been there with his prodigious industry, his commanding comprehensive vision, his burning zeal, and his power of kindling in men so different from him and from one another as Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Grey, a zeal only less intense than his own.

It was in the spring of 1786 that the articles of charge of Hastings's high crimes and misdemeanours, as Burke had drawn them, were presented to the House of Commons. It was in February, 1788, that Burke opened the vast cause in the old historic hall at Westminster, in an oration in which at points he was wound up to such a pitch of eloquence and passion that every listener, including the great criminal, held his breath in an agony of horror; that women were carried out fainting; that the speaker himself became incapable of saying another word, and the spectators of the scene began to wonder whether he would not, like the mighty Chatham, actually die in the exertion of

his overwhelming powers. Among the illustrious crowd who thronged Westminster Hall in the opening days of the impeachment, was Fanny Burney. She was then in her odious bondage at Court, and was animated by that admiration and pity for Hastings which at Court was the fashion. Windham used to come up from the box of the managers of the impeachment to talk over with her the incidents of the day, and she gave him her impressions of Burke's speech, which were probably those of the majority of his hearers, for the majority were favourable to Hastings. "I told him," says Miss Burney, "that Mr. Burke's opening had struck me with the highest admiration of his powers, from the eloquence, the imagination, the fire, the diversity of expression, and the ready flow of language with which he seemed gifted, in a most superior manner, for any and every purpose to which rhetoric could lead." "And when he came to his two narratives," I continued, "when he related the particulars of those dreadful murders, he interested, he engaged, he at last overpowered me; I felt my cause lost. I could hardly keep on my seat. My eyes dreaded a single glance towards a man so accused as Mr. Hastings; I wanted to sink on the floor, that they might be saved so painful a sight. I had no hope he could clear himself; not another wish in his favour remained. But when from this narration Mr. Burke proceeded to his own comments and declamation—when the charges of rapacity, cruelty, tyranny, were general, and made with all the violence of personal detestation, and continued and aggravated without any further fact or illustration; then there appeared more of study than of truth, more of invective than of justice; and, in short, so little of proof to so much of passion, that in a very short time I began to lift up my head, my seat was no longer

uneasy, my eyes were indifferent which way they looked, or what object caught them, and before I was myself aware of the declension of Mr. Burke's powers over my feelings, I found myself a mere spectator in a public place, and looking all around it, with my opera-glass in my hand!"

In 1795, six years after Burke's opening, the Lords were ready with their verdict. It had long been anticipated. Hastings was acquitted. This was the close of the fourteen years of labour, from the date of the Select Committee of 1781. "If I were to call for a reward," Burke said, "it would be for the services in which for fourteen years, without intermission, I showed the most industry and had the least success. I mean the affairs of India; they are those on which I value myself the most; most for the importance; most for the labour; most for the judgment; most for constancy and perseverance in the pursuit."

The side that is defeated on a particular issue, is often victorious in the wide and general outcome. Looking back across the ninety years that divide us from that memorable scene in Westminster Hall, we may see that Burke had more success than at first appeared. If he did not convict the man, he overthrew a system, and stamped its principles with lasting censure and shame. Burke had perhaps a silent conviction that it would have been better for us and for India, if Clive had succeeded in his attempt to blow out his own brains in the Madras counting-house, or if the battle of Plassy had been a decisive defeat instead of a decisive victory. "All these circumstances," he once said, in reference to the results of the investigation of the Select Committee, "are not, I confess, very favourable to the idea of our attempting to govern India at all. But there we are: there we are placed by the Sovereign Dis-

poser, and we must do the best we can in our situation. The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty." If that situation is better understood now than it was a century ago, and that duty more loftily conceived, the result is due, so far as such results can ever be due to one man's action apart from the confluence of the deep impersonal elements of time, to the seeds of justice and humanity which were sown by Burke and his associates. Nobody now believes that Clive was justified in tricking Omichund by forging another man's name; that Impey was justified in hanging Nuncomar for committing the very offence for which Clive was excused or applauded, although forgery is no grave crime according to Hindoo usage, and it is the gravest according to English usage; that Hastings did well in selling English troops to assist in the extermination of a brave people with whom he was at peace; that Benfield did well in conniving with an Eastern prince in a project of extortion against his subjects. The whole drift of opinion has changed, and it is since the trial of Hastings that the change has taken place. The question in Burke's time was whether oppression and corruption were to continue to be the guiding maxims of English policy. The personal disinterestedness of the ruler who had been the chief founder of this policy, and had most openly set aside all pretence of righteous principle, was dust in the balance. It was impossible to suppress the policy without striking a deadly blow at its most eminent and powerful instrument. That Hastings was acquitted, was immaterial. The lesson of his impeachment had been taught with sufficiently impressive force—the great lesson that Asiatics have rights, and that Europeans have obligations; that a superior race is bound to observe the highest current morality of the time in all its dealings with the

subject race. Burke is entitled to our lasting reverence as the first apostle and great upholder of integrity, mercy, and honour in the relation between his countrymen and their humble dependents.

He shared the common fate of those who dare to strike a blow for human justice against the prejudices of national egotism. But he was no longer able to bear obloquy and neglect, as he had borne it through the war with the colonies. When he opened the impeachment of Hastings at Westminster, Burke was very near to his sixtieth year. Hannah More noted in 1786 that his vivacity had diminished, and that business and politics had impaired his agreeableness. The simpletons in the House, now that they had at last found in Pitt a political chief who could beat the Whig leaders on their own ground of eloquence, knowledge, and dexterity in debate, took heart as they had never done under Lord North. They now made deliberate attempts to silence the veteran by unmannerly and brutal interruptions, of which a mob of lower class might have been ashamed. Then suddenly came a moment of such excitement as has not often been seen in the annals of party. It became known one day, in the autumn of 1788, that the King had gone out of his mind.

The news naturally caused the liveliest agitation among the Whigs. When the severity of the attack forced the ministry to make preparations for a Regency, the friends of the Prince of Wales assumed that they would speedily return to power, and hastened to form their plans accordingly. Fox was travelling in Italy with Mrs. Armitage, and he had been two months away without hearing a word from England. The Duke of Portland sent a messenger in search of him, and after a journey of ten days the messenger found him at Bologna. Fox instantly set off in all

haste for London, which he reached in nine days. The three months that followed were a time of unsurpassed activity and bitterness, and Burke was at least as active and as bitter as the rest of them. He was the writer of the Prince of Wales's letter to Pitt, sometimes set down to Sheridan, and sometimes to Gilbert Elliot. It makes us feel how naturally the style of ideal kingship, its dignity, calm, and high self-consciousness all came to Burke. Although we read of his thus drawing up manifestoes and protests, and deciding minor questions for Fox, which Fox was too irresolute to decide for himself, yet we have it on Burke's own authority that some time elapsed after the return to England before he even saw Fox; that he was not consulted as to the course to be pursued in the grave and difficult questions connected with the Regency; and that he knew as little of the inside of Carlton House, where the Prince of Wales lived, as of Buckingham House, where the King lived. "I mean to continue here," he says to Charles Fox, "until you call upon me; and I find myself perfectly easy, from the implicit confidence that I have in you and the Duke, and the certainty that I am in that you two will do the best for the general advantage of the cause. In that state of mind I feel no desire whatsoever of interfering." Yet the letter itself, and others which follow, testify to the vehemence of Burke's interest in the matter, and to the persistency with which he would have had them follow his judgment, if they would have listened. It is as clear that they did not listen.

Apart from the fierce struggle against Pitt's Regency Bill, Burke's friends were intently occupied with the reconstruction of the Portland cabinet, which the King had so unexpectedly dismissed five years before. This was a sphere in which Burke's gifts were neither required nor

sought. We are rather in distress, Sir Gilbert Elliot writes, for a proper man for the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. "Lord J. Cavendish is very unwilling to engage again in public affairs. Fox is to be Secretary of State. Burke, it is thought, would not be approved of, Sheridan has not the public confidence, and so it comes down therefore to Grey, Pelham, myself, and perhaps Windham." Elliot was one of Burke's most faithful and attached friends, and he was intimately concerned in all that was going on in the inner circle of the party. It is worth while, therefore, to reproduce his account, from a confidential letter to Lady Elliot, of the way in which Burke's claim to recognition was at this time regarded and dealt with.

Although I can tell you nothing positive about my own situation, I was made very happy indeed yesterday by co-operating in the settlement of Burke's, in a manner which gives us great joy as well as comfort. The Duke of Portland has felt distressed how to arrange Burke and his family in a manner equal to Burke's merits, and to the Duke's own wishes, and at the same time so as to be exempt from the many difficulties which seem to be in the way. He sent for Pelham and me, as Burke's friends and his own, to advise with us about it; and we dined yesterday with him and the Duchess, that we might have time to talk the thing over at leisure and without interruption after dinner. We stayed, accordingly, engaged in that subject till almost twelve at night, and our conference ended most happily, and excessively to the satisfaction of us all. The Duke of Portland has the veneration for Burke that Windham, Pelham, myself, and a few more have, and he thinks it impossible to do too much for him. He considers the reward to be given to Burke as a credit and honour to the nation, and he considers the neglect of him and his embarrassed situation as having been long a reproach to the country. The unjust prejudice and clamour which has prevailed against him and his family only determine the Duke the more to do him justice. The question was how? First, his brother Richard, who was Secretary to the Treasury before, will have the same office

now, but the Duke intends to give him one of the first offices which falls vacant, of about 1000*l.* a year for life in the Customs, and he will then resign the Secretary to the Treasury, which, however, in the meanwhile is worth 3000*l.* a year. Edmund Burke is to have the Pay Office, 4000*l.* a year; but as that is precarious and he can leave no provision for his son, it would, in fact, be doing little or nothing of any real or substantial value unless some *permanent* provision is added to it. In this view the Duke is to grant him on the Irish establishment a pension of 2000*l.* a year *clear* for his own life, and the other half to Mrs. Burke for her life. This will make Burke completely happy, by leaving his wife and son safe from want after his death, if they should survive him. The Duke's affectionate anxiety to accomplish this object, and his determination to set all clamour at defiance on this point of justice, was truly affecting, and increases my attachment for the Duke. . . . The Duke said the only objection to this plan was that he thought it was due from this country, and that he grudged the honour of it to Ireland; but as nothing in England was ready, this plan was settled. You may think it strange that to this moment Burke does not know a word of all this, and his family are indeed, I believe, suffering a little under the apprehension that he may be neglected in the general scramble. I believe there never were three cabinet counsellors more in harmony on any subject than we were, nor three people happier in their day's work.[1]

This leaves the apparent puzzle where it was. Why should Burke not be approved of for Chancellor of the Exchequer? What were the many difficulties described as seeming to be in the way of arranging for Burke, in a manner equal to Burke's merits and the Duke of Portland's wishes? His personal relations with the chiefs of his party were at this time extremely cordial and intimate. He was constantly a guest at the Duke of Portland's most private dinner-parties. Fox had gone down to Beaconsfield to recruit himself from the fatigues of his rapid journey from Bologna, and to spend some days in quiet with Windham and the master of the house. Elliot and Wind-

[1] *Life and Letters of Sir G. Elliot*, i. 261–3.

ham, who were talked about for a post for which one of them says that Burke would not have been approved, vied with one another in adoring Burke. Finally, Elliot and the Duke think themselves happy in a day's work which ended in consigning the man who not only was, but was admitted to be, the most powerful genius of their party, to a third-rate post, and that most equivocal distinction, a pension on the Irish establishment. The common explanation that it illustrates Whig exclusiveness cannot be seriously received as adequate. It is probable, for one thing, that the feelings of the Prince of Wales had more to do with it than the feelings of men like the Duke of Portland or Fox. We can easily imagine how little that most worthless of human creatures would appreciate the great qualities of such a man as Burke. The painful fact which we are unable to conceal from ourselves is, that the common opinion of better men than the Prince of Wales leaned in the same direction. His violence in the course of the Regency debates had produced strong disapproval in the public and downright consternation in his own party. On one occasion he is described by a respectable observer as having "been wilder than ever, and laid himself and his party more open than ever speaker did. He is folly personified, but shaking his cap and bells under the laurel of genius. He finished his wild speech in a manner next to madness." Moore believes that Burke's indiscretions in these trying and prolonged transactions sowed the seeds of the alienation between him and Fox two years afterwards. Burke's excited state of mind showed itself in small things as well as great. Going with Windham to Carlton House, Burke attacked him in the coach for a difference of opinion about the affairs of a friend, and behaved with such unreasonable passion and such furious

rudeness of manner, that his magnanimous admirer had some difficulty in obliterating the impression. The public were less tolerant. Windham has told us that at this time Burke was a man decried, persecuted, and proscribed, not being much valued even by his own party, and by half the nation considered as little better than an ingenious madman.[1] This is evidence beyond impeachment, for Windham loved and honoured Burke with the affection and reverence of a son; and he puts the popular sentiment on record with grief and amazement. There is other testimony to the same effect. The late Lord Lansdowne, who must have heard the subject abundantly discussed by those who were most concerned in it, was once asked by a very eminent man of our own time why the Whigs kept Burke out of their cabinets. "Burke!" he cried; "he was so violent, so overbearing, so arrogant, so intractable, that to have got on with him in a cabinet would have been utterly and absolutely impossible."

On the whole, it seems to be tolerably clear that the difficulties in the way of Burke's promotion to high office were his notoriously straitened circumstances; his ungoverned excesses of party zeal and political passion; finally, what Sir Gilbert Elliot calls the unjust prejudice and clamour against him and his family, and what Burke himself once called the hunt of obloquy that pursued him all his life. The first two of these causes can scarcely have operated in the arrangements that were made in the Rockingham and Coalition ministries. But the third, we may be sure, was incessantly at work. It would have needed social courage alike in 1782, 1783, and 1788 to give cabinet rank to a man round whose name there floated so many disparaging associations. Social courage is exactly

[1] Windham's *Diary*, p. 213.

the virtue in which the constructors of a government will always think themselves least able to indulge. Burke, we have to remember, did not stand alone before the world. Elliot describes a dinner-party at Lord Fitzwilliams's, at which four of these half-discredited Irishmen were present. "Burke has now got such a train after him as would sink anybody but himself—his son, who is quite *nauseated* by all mankind; his brother, who is liked better than his son, but is rather offensive with animal spirits and with brogue; and his cousin, Will Burke, who is just returned unexpectedly from India, as much ruined as when he went many years ago, and who is a fresh charge on any prospects of power that Burke may ever have." It was this train, and the ideas of adventurership that clung to them, the inextinguishable stories about papistry and Saint Omer's, the tenacious calumny about the letters of Junius, the notorious circumstances of embarrassment and neediness—it was all these things which combined with Burke's own defects of temper and discretion, to give the Whig grandees as decent a reason as they could have desired for keeping all the great posts of state in their own hands.

It seems difficult to deny that the questions of the Regency had caused the germs of a sort of dissatisfaction and strain in the relations between Fox and Burke. Their feelings to one another have been well compared to the mutual discontent between partners in unsuccessful play, where each suspects that it is the mistakes of the other that lost the game. Whether Burke felt conscious of the failures in discretion and temper, which were the real or pretended excuse for neglect, we cannot tell. There is one passage that reveals a chagrin of this kind. A few days after the meeting between the Duke of Portland and Elliot, for the purpose of settling his place in the new minis-

try, Burke went down to Beaconsfield. In writing (January 24th, 1789) to invite Windham and Pelham to come to stay a night, with promise of a leg of mutton cooked by a dairy-maid who was not a bad hand at a pinch, he goes on to say that his health has received some small benefit from his journey to the country. "But this view to health, though far from unnecessary to me, was not the chief cause of my present retreat. I began to find that I was grown rather too anxious; and had begun to discover to myself and to others a solicitude relative to the present state of affairs, which, though their strange condition might well warrant it in others, is certainly less suitable to my time of life, in which all emotions are less allowed; and to which, most certainly, all human concerns ought in reason to become more indifferent, than to those who have work to do, and a good deal of day, and of inexhausted strength, to do it in."[1]

The King's unexpected restoration to health two or three weeks later, brought to nought all the hope and ambition of the Whigs, and confirmed Pitt in power for the rest of Burke's lifetime. But an event now came to pass in the world's history which transformed Burke in an instant from a man decried, persecuted, proscribed, into an object of exultant adoration all over Europe.

[1] *Correspondence*, iii. 89.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

We have now come to the second of the two momentous changes in the world's affairs, in which Burke played an imposing and historic part. His attitude in the first of them, the struggle for American independence, commands almost without alloy the admiration and reverence of posterity. His attitude in the second of them, the great revolution in France, has raised controversies which can only be compared in heat and duration to the master controversies of theology. If the history of society were written as learned men write the history of the Christian faith and its churches, Burke would figure in the same strong prominence, whether deplorable or glorious, as Arius and Athanasius, Augustine and Sabellius, Luther and Ignatius. If we ask how it is that now, nearly a century after the event, men are still discussing Burke's pamphlet on the Revolution as they are still discussing Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, the answer is that in one case as in the other the questions at issue are still unsettled, and that Burke offers in their highest and most comprehensive form all the considerations that belong to one side of the dispute. He was not of those of whom Coleridge said that they proceeded with much solemnity to solve the riddle of the French Revolution by anecdotes. He suspended it in the

same light of great social ideas and wide principles, in which its authors and champions professed to represent it. Unhappily he advanced from criticism to practical exhortation, in our opinion the most mischievous and indefensible that has ever been pressed by any statesman on any nation. But the force of the criticism remains, its foresight remains, its commemoration of valuable elements of life which men were forgetting, its discernment of the limitations of things, its sense of the awful emergencies of the problem. When our grandchildren have made up their minds, once for all, as to the merits of the social transformation which dawned on Europe in 1789, then Burke's *Reflections* will become a mere literary antiquity, and not before.

From the very beginning Burke looked upon the proceedings in France with distrust. He had not a moment of enthusiasm or sympathy of which to repent. When the news reached England that the insurgents of Paris had stormed the Bastille, Fox exclaimed with exultation, how much it was the greatest event that had ever happened in the world, how much the best. Is it an infirmity to wish, for an instant, that some such phrase of generous hope had escaped from Burke; that he had for a day or an hour undergone that fine illusion which was lighted up in the spirits of men like Wordsworth and Coleridge? Those great poets, who were destined one day to preach even a wiser and a loftier conservatism than his own, have told us what they felt—

> When France in wrath her giant limbs upreared,
> And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
> Stamped her strong foot, and said she would be free.

Burke from the first espied the looming shadow of a catastrophe. In August he wrote to Lord Charlemont

that the events in France had something paradoxical and mysterious about them; that the outbreak of the old Parisian ferocity might be no more than a sudden explosion, but if it should happen to be *character* rather than accident, then the people would need a strong hand like that of their former masters to coerce them; that all depended upon the French having wise heads among them, and upon these wise heads, if such there were, acquiring an authority to match their wisdom. There is nothing here but a calm and sagacious suspense of judgment. It soon appeared that the old Parisian ferocity was still alive. In the events of October, 1789, when the mob of Paris marched out to Versailles and marched back again with the King and Queen in triumphal procession, Burke felt in his heart that the beginning of the end had come, and that the catastrophe was already at hand. In October he wrote a long letter to the French gentleman to whom he afterwards addressed the *Reflections*. "You hope, sir," he said, "that I think the French deserving of liberty. I certainly do. I certainly think that all men who desire it deserve it. We cannot forfeit our right to it, but by what forfeits our title to the privileges of our kind. The liberty I mean is *social* freedom. It is that state of things in which liberty is secured by equality of restraint. This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice. *Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is in my opinion safe.*" The weightiest and most important of all political truths, and worth half the fine things that poets have sung about freedom—if it could only have been respected, how different the course of the Revolution! But the engineer who attempts to deal with the abysmal rush of the falls of Niagara must put aside the tools that constructed the Bridgewater Canal and the Chelsea Waterworks. Nobody

recognised so early as Burke that France had really embarked among cataracts and boiling gulfs, and the pith of all his first criticisms, including the *Reflections*, was the proposition that to separate freedom from justice was nothing else than to steer the ship of state direct into the Maelstrom. It is impossible to deny that this was true. Unfortunately it was a truth which the wild spirits that were then abroad in the storm made of no avail.

Destiny aimed an evil stroke when Burke, whose whole soul was bound up in order, peace, and gently enlarged precedent, found himself face to face with the portentous man-devouring Sphinx. He, who could not endure that a few clergymen should be allowed to subscribe to the Bible instead of to the Articles, saw the ancient Church of Christendom prostrated, its possessions confiscated, its priests proscribed, and Christianity itself officially superseded. The economical reformer, who when his zeal was hottest declined to discharge a tide-waiter or a scullion in the royal kitchen, who should have acquired the shadow of a vested interest in his post, beheld two great orders stripped of their privileges and deprived of much of their lands, though their possession had been sanctified by the express voice of the laws and the prescription of many centuries. He, who was full of apprehension and anger at the proposal to take away a member of Parliament from St. Michael's or Old Sarum, had to look on while the most august monarchy in Europe was overturned. The man who dreaded fanatics, hated atheists, despised political theorisers, and was driven wild at the notion of applying metaphysical rights and abstract doctrines to public affairs, suddenly beheld a whole kingdom given finally up to fanatics, atheists, and theorisers, who talked of nothing but the rights of man, and deliberately set as wide a gulf as ruin

and bloodshed could make between themselves and every incident or institution in the history of their land. The statesman who had once declared, and habitually proved, his preference for peace over even truth, who had all his life surrounded himself with a mental paradise of order and equilibrium, in a moment found himself confronted by the stupendous and awful spectre which a century of disorder had raised in its supreme hour. It could not have been difficult for any one who had studied Burke's character and career, to foretell all that now came to pass with him.

It was from an English, and not from a French point of view, that Burke was first drawn to write upon the Revolution. The 4th of November was the anniversary of the landing of the Prince of Orange, and the first act in the Revolution of 1688. The members of an association which called itself the Revolution Society, chiefly composed of Dissenters, but not without a mixture of Churchmen, including a few peers and a good many members of the House of Commons, met as usual to hear a sermon in commemoration of the glorious day. Dr. Price was the preacher, and both in the morning sermon and in the speeches which followed in the festivities of the afternoon the French were held up to the loudest admiration, as having carried the principles of our own Revolution to a loftier height, and having opened boundless hopes to mankind. By these harmless proceedings Burke's anger and scorn were aroused to a pitch which must seem to us, as it seemed to not a few of his contemporaries, singularly out of all proportion to its cause. Deeper things were doubtless in silent motion within him. He set to work upon a denunciation of Price's doctrines, with a velocity that reminds us of Aristotle's comparison

of anger to the over-hasty servant, who runs off with all speed before he has listened to half the message. This was the origin of the *Reflections*. The design grew as the writer went on. His imagination took fire; his memory quickened a throng of impressive associations; his excited vision revealed to him a band of vain, petulant upstarts persecuting the ministers of a sacred religion, insulting a virtuous and innocent sovereign, and covering with humiliation the august daughter of the Cæsars; his mind teemed with the sage maxims of the philosophy of things established, and the precepts of the gospel of order. Every courier that crossed the Channel supplied new material to his contempt and his alarm. He condemned the whole method and course of the French reforms. His judgment was in suspense no more. He no longer distrusted; he hated, despised, and began to dread.

Men soon began to whisper abroad that Burke thought ill of what was going on over the water. When it transpired that he was writing a pamphlet, the world of letters was stirred with the liveliest expectation. The name of the author, the importance of the subject, and the singularity of his opinions, so Mackintosh informs us, all inflamed the public curiosity. Soon after Parliament met for the session (1790), the army estimates were brought up. Fox criticised the increase of our forces, and incidentally hinted something in praise of the French army, which had shown that a man could be a soldier without ceasing to be a citizen. Some days afterwards the subject was revived, and Pitt, as well as Fox, avowed himself hopeful of the good effect of the Revolution upon the order and government of France. Burke followed in a very different vein, openly proclaiming that dislike and fear of the Revolution which was to be the one ceaseless refrain of

all that he spoke or wrote for the rest of his life. He deplored Fox's praise of the army for breaking their lawful allegiance, and then he proceeded with ominous words to the effect that, if any friend of his should concur in any measures which should tend to introduce such a democracy as that of France, he would abandon his best friends and join with his worst enemies to oppose either the means or the end. This has unanimously been pronounced one of the most brilliant and effective speeches that Burke ever made. Fox rose with distress on every feature, and made the often-quoted declaration of his debt to Burke: "If all the political information I have learned from books, all which I have gained from science, and all which my knowledge of the world and its affairs has taught me, were put into one scale, and the improvement which I have derived from my right honourable friend's instruction and conversation were placed in the other, I should be at a loss to decide to which to give the preference. I have learnt more from my right honourable friend than from all the men with whom I ever conversed." All seemed likely to end in a spirit of conciliation, until Sheridan rose, and in the plainest terms that he could find expressed his dissent from everything that Burke had said. Burke immediately renounced his friendship. For the first time in his life he found the sympathy of the House vehemently on his side.

In the following month (March, 1790) this unpromising incident was succeeded by an aberration which no rational man will now undertake to defend. Fox brought forward a motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. He did this in accordance with a recent suggestion of Burke's own, that he should strengthen his political position by winning the support of the Dissenters.

Burke himself had always denounced the Test Act as bad, and as an abuse of sacred things. To the amazement of everybody, and to the infinite scandal of his party, he now pronounced the Dissenters to be disaffected citizens, and refused to relieve them. Well might Fox say that Burke's words had filled him with grief and shame.

Meanwhile the great rhetorical fabric gradually arose. Burke revised, erased, moderated, strengthened, emphasized, wrote and re-wrote with indefatigable industry. With the manuscript constantly under his eyes, he lingered busily, pen in hand, over paragraphs and phrases, antitheses and apophthegms. The *Reflections* was no superb improvisation. Its composition recalls Palma Giovine's account of the mighty Titian's way of working; how the master made his preparations with resolute strokes of a heavily-laden brush, and then turned his picture to the wall, and by-and-by resumed again, and then again and again, redressing, adjusting, modelling the light with a rub of his finger, or dabbing a spot of dark colour into some corner with a touch of his thumb, and finally working all his smirches, contrasts, abruptnesses, into the glorious harmony that we know. Burke was so unwearied in this insatiable correction and alteration, that the printer found it necessary, instead of making the changes marked upon the proof-sheets, to set up the whole in type afresh. The work was upon the easel for exactly a year. It was November (1790) before the result came into the hands of the public. It was a small octavo of three hundred and fifty-six pages, in contents rather less than twice the present volume, bound in an unlettered wrapper of grey paper, and sold for five shillings. In less than twelve months it reached its eleventh edition, and it has been computed

that not many short of thirty thousand copies were sold within the next six years.

The first curiosity had languished in the course of the long delay, but it was revived in its strongest force when the book itself appeared. A remarkable effect instantly followed. Before the *Reflections* was published, the predominant sentiment in England had been one of mixed astonishment and sympathy. Pitt had expressed this common mood both in the House of Commons and in private. It was impossible for England not to be amazed at the uprising of a nation whom they had been accustomed to think of as willing slaves, and it was impossible for her, when the scene did not happen to be the American colonies or Ireland, not to profess good wishes for the cause of emancipation all over the world. Apart from the natural admiration of a free people for a neighbour struggling to be free, England saw no reason to lament a blow to a sovereign and a government who had interfered on the side of her insurgent colonies. To this easy state of mind Burke's book put an immediate end. At once, as contemporaries assure us, it divided the nation into two parties. On both sides it precipitated opinion. With a long-resounding blast on his golden trumpet Burke had unfurled a new flag, and half the nation hurried to rally to it—that half which had scouted his views on America, which had bitterly disliked his plan of Economic Reform, which had mocked his ideas on religious toleration, and which a moment before had hated and reviled him beyond all men living, for his fierce tenacity in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The King said to everybody who came near him that the book was a good book, a very good book, and every gentleman ought to read it. The universities began to think of offering the scarlet gown of

their most honourable degree to the assailant of Price and the Dissenters. The great army of the indolent good, the people who lead excellent lives and never use their reason, took violent alarm. The timorous, the weak-minded, the bigoted, were suddenly awakened to a sense of what they owed to themselves. Burke gave them the key which enabled them to interpret the Revolution in harmony with their usual ideas and their temperament.

Reaction quickly rose to a high pitch. One preacher in a parish church in the neighbourhood of London celebrated the anniversary of the Restoration of King Charles II. by a sermon, in which the pains of eternal damnation were confidently promised to political disaffection. Romilly, mentioning to a friend that the *Reflections* had got into a fourteenth edition, wondered whether Burke was not rather ashamed of his success. It is when we come to the rank and file of reaction that we find it hard to forgive the man of genius who made himself the organ of their selfishness, their timidity, and their blindness. We know, alas! that the parts of his writings on French affairs to which they would fly were not likely to be the parts which calm men now read with sympathy, but the scoldings, the screamings, the unworthy vituperation with which, especially in the latest of them, he attacked everybody who took part in the Revolution, from Condorcet and Lafayette down to Marat and Couthon. It was the feet of clay that they adored in their image, and not the head of fine gold and the breasts and the arms of silver.

On the continent of Europe the excitement was as great among the ruling classes as it was at home. Mirabeau, who had made Burke's acquaintance some years before in England, and even been his guest at Beaconsfield, now made the *Reflections* the text of more than one tremen-

dous philippic. Louis XVI. is said to have translated the book into French with his own hand. Catherine of Russia, Voltaire's adored Semiramis of the North, the benefactress of Diderot, the ready helper of the philosophic party, pressed her congratulations on the great pontiff of the old order, who now thundered anathema against the philosophers and all their works.

It is important to remember the stage which the Revolution had reached when Burke was composing his attack upon it. The year 1790 was precisely the time when the hopes of the best men in France shone most brightly, and seemed most reasonable. There had been disorders, and Paris still had ferocity in her mien. But Robespierre was an obscure figure on the back benches of the Assembly. Nobody had ever heard of Danton. The name of Republic had never been so much as whispered. The King still believed that constitutional monarchy would leave him as much power as he desired. He had voluntarily gone to the National Assembly, and in simple language had exhorted them all to imitate his example by professing the single opinion, the single interest, the single wish—attachment to the new constitution, and ardent desire for the peace and happiness of France. The clergy, it is true, were violently irritated by the spoliation of their goods, and the nobles had crossed the Rhine, to brood impotently in the safety of Coblenz over projects of a bloody revenge upon their country. But France, meanwhile, paid little heed either to the anger of the clergy or the menaces of the emigrant nobles, and at the very moment when Burke was writing his most sombre pages, Paris and the provinces were celebrating with transports of joy and enthusiasm the civic oath, the federation, the restoration of concord to the land, the final establishment of freedom

and justice in a regenerated France. This was the happy scene over which Burke suddenly stretched out the right arm of an inspired prophet, pointing to the cloud of thunder and darkness that was gathering on the hills, and proclaiming to them the doom that had been written upon the wall by the fingers of an inexorable hand. It is no wonder that when the cloud burst and the doom was fulfilled, men turned to Burke, as they went of old to Ahithophel, whose counsel was as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God.

It is not to our purpose to discuss all the propositions advanced in the *Reflections*, much less to reply to them. The book is like some temple, by whose structure and design we allow ourselves to be impressed, without being careful to measure the precise truth or fitness of the worship to which it was consecrated by its first founders. Just as the student of the *Politics* of Aristotle may well accept all the wisdom of it, without caring to protest at every turn against slavery as the basis of a society, so we may well cherish all the wisdom of the *Reflections*, at this distance of time, without marking as a rubric on every page that half of these impressive formulæ and inspiring declamations were irrelevant to the occasion which called them forth, and exercised for the hour an influence that was purely mischievous. Time permits to us this profitable lenity. In reading this, the first of his invectives, it is important for the sake of clearness of judgment to put from our minds the practical policy which Burke afterwards so untiringly urged upon his countrymen. As yet there is no exhortation to England to interfere, and we still listen to the voice of the statesman, and are not deafened by the passionate cries of the preacher of a crusade. When Burke wrote the *Reflections*, he was justified in crit-

icising the Revolution as an extraordinary movement, but still a movement professing to be conducted on the principles of rational and practicable politics. They were the principles to which competent onlookers like Jefferson and Morris had expected the Assembly to conform, but to which the Assembly never conformed for an instant. It was on the principles of rational politics that Fox and Sheridan admired it. On these principles Burke condemned it. He declared that the methods of the Constituent Assembly, up to the summer of 1790, were unjust, precipitate, destructive, and without stability. Men had chosen to build their house on the sands, and the winds and the seas would speedily beat against it and overthrow it.

His prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. What is still more important for the credit of his foresight is, that not only did his prophecy come true, but it came true for the reasons that he had fixed upon. It was, for instance, the constitution of the Church, in which Burke saw the worst of the many bad mistakes of the Assembly. History, now slowly shaking herself free from the passions of a century, agrees that the civil constitution of the clergy was the measure which, more than any other, decisively put an end to whatever hopes there might have been of a peaceful transition from the old order to the new. A still more striking piece of foresight is the prediction of the despotism of the Napoleonic Empire. Burke had compared the levelling policy of the Assembly in their geometrical division of the departments, and their isolation from one another of the bodies of the state, to the treatment which a conquered country receives at the hands of its conquerors. Like Romans in Greece or Macedon, the French innovators had destroyed the bonds of union, under color of provid-

ing for the independence of each of their cities. "If the present project of a Republic should fail," Burke said, with a prescience really profound, "all securities to a moderate freedom fail with it. All the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed; insomuch that, if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendancy in France under this or any other dynasty, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth." Almost at the same moment Mirabeau was secretly writing to the King, that their plan of reducing all citizens to a single class would have delighted Richelieu. This equal surface, he said, facilitates the exercise of power, and many reigns in an absolute government would not have done as much as this single year of revolution for the royal authority. Time showed that Burke and Mirabeau were right.

History ratifies nearly all Burke's strictures on the levity and precipitancy of the first set of actors in the revolutionary drama. No part of the *Reflections* is more energetic than the denunciation of geometric and literary methods; and these are just what the modern explorer hits upon, as one of the fatal secrets of the catastrophe. De Tocqueville's chapter on the causes which made literary men the principal persons in France, and the effect which this had upon the Revolution (Bk. III. ch. i.), is only a little too cold to be able to pass for Burke's own. Quinet's work on the Revolution is one long sermon, full of eloquence and cogency, upon the incapacity and blindness of the men who undertook the conduct of a tremendous crisis upon mere literary methods, without the moral courage to obey the logic of their beliefs, with the student's ignorance of the eager passion and rapid imagination of

multitudes of men, with the pedant's misappreciation of a people, of whom it has been said by one of themselves that there never was a nation more led by its sensations, and less by its principles. Comte, again, points impressively to the Revolution as the period which illustrates more decisively than another the peril of confounding the two great functions of speculation and political action; and he speaks with just reprobation of the preposterous idea in the philosophic politicians of the epoch, that society was at their disposal, independent of its past development, devoid of inherent impulses, and easily capable of being morally regenerated by the mere modification of legislative rules.

What then was it that, in the midst of so much perspicacity as to detail, blinded Burke, at the time when he wrote the *Reflections*, to the true nature of the movement? Is it not this, that he judges the Revolution as the solution of a merely political question? If the Revolution had been merely political, his judgment would have been adequate. The question was much deeper. It was a social question that burned under the surface of what seemed no more than a modification of external arrangements. That Burke was alive to the existence of social problems, and that he was even tormented by them, we know from an incidental passage in the *Reflections*. There he tells us how often he had reflected, and never reflected without feeling, upon the innumerable servile and degrading occupations to which, by the social economy, so many wretches are inevitably doomed. He had pondered whether there could be any means of rescuing these unhappy people from their miserable industry, without disturbing the natural course of things, and impeding the great wheel of circulation which is turned by their labour. This is the vein

of that striking passage in his first composition, which I have already quoted (p. 16). Burke did not yet see, and probably never saw, that one key to the events which astonished and exasperated him, was simply that the persons most urgently concerned had taken the riddle which perplexed him into their own hands, and had in fiery earnest set about their own deliverance. The pith of the Revolution, up to 1790, was less the political constitution, of which Burke says so much, and so much that is true, but the social and economic transformation, of which he says so little. It was not a question of the power of the King, or the measure of an electoral circumscription, that made the Revolution; it was the iniquitous distribution of the taxes, the scourge of the militia service, the scourge of the road service, the destructive tyranny exercised in the vast preserves of wild game, the vexatious rights and imposts of the lords of manors, and all the other odious burdens and heavy impediments on the prosperity of the thrifty and industrious part of the nation. If he had seen ever so clearly that one of the most important sides of the Revolution in progress was the rescue of the tiller of the soil, Burke would still doubtless have viewed events with bitter suspicion. For the process could not be executed without disturbing the natural course of things, and without violating his principle that all changes should find us with our minds tenacious of justice and tender of property. A closer examination than he chose to give, of the current administration alike of justice and of property under the old system, would have explained to him that an hour had come in which the spirit of property and of justice compelled a supersession of the letter.

If Burke had insisted on rigidly keeping sensibility to the wrongs of the French people out of the discussion, on

the ground that the whole subject was one for positive knowledge and logical inference, his position would have been intelligible and defensible. He followed no such course. His pleading turns constantly to arguments from feeling; but it is always to feeling on one side, and to a sensibility that is only alive to the concentrated force of historic associations. How much pure and uncontrolled emotion had to do with what ought to have been the reasoned judgments of his understanding, we know on his own evidence. He had sent the proof-sheets of a part of his book to Sir Philip Francis. They contained the famous passage describing the French Queen as he had seen her seventeen years before at Versailles. Francis bluntly wrote to him that, in his opinion, all Burke's eloquence about Marie Antoinette was no better than pure foppery, and he referred to the Queen herself as no better than Messalina. Burke was so excited by this that his son, in a rather officious letter, begged Francis not to repeat such stimulating remonstrance. What is interesting in the incident is Burke's own reply. He knew nothing, he said, of the story of Messalina, and declined the obligation of proving judicially the virtues of all those whom he saw suffering wrong and contumely, before he endeavoured to interest others in their sufferings, and before endeavouring to kindle horror against midnight assassins at backstairs and their more wicked abettors in pulpits. And then he went on, "I tell you again that the recollection of the manner in which I saw the Queen of France in the year 1774 [1773], and the contrast between that brilliancy, splendour, and beauty, with the prostrate homage of a nation to her, and the abominable scene of 1789 which I was describing, *did* draw tears from me and wetted my paper. These tears came again into my eyes al-

most as often as I looked at the description—they may again."

The answer was obvious. It was well to pity the unmerited agonies of Marie Antoinette, though as yet, we must remember, she had suffered nothing beyond the indignities of the days of October at Versailles. But did not the protracted agonies of a nation deserve the tribute of a tear? As Paine asked, were men to weep over the plumage, and forget the dying bird? The bulk of the people must labour, Burke told them, "to obtain what by labour can be obtained; and when they find, as they commonly do, the success disproportioned to the endeavour, they must be taught their consolation in the final proportions of eternal justice." When we know that a Lyons silk-weaver, working as hard as he could for over seventeen hours a day, could not earn money enough to procure the most bare and urgent necessaries of subsistence, we may know with what benignity of brow eternal justice must have presented herself in the garret of that hapless wretch. It was no idle abstraction, no metaphysical right of man, for which the French cried, but only the practical right of being permitted, by their own toil, to save themselves and the little ones about their knees from hunger and cruel death. The *mainmortable* serfs of ecclesiastics are variously said to have been a million and a million and a half at the time of the Revolution. Burke's horror, as he thought of the priests and prelates who left palaces and dignities to earn a scanty living by the drudgery of teaching their language in strange lands, should have been alleviated by the thought that a million or more of men were rescued from ghastly material misery. Are we to be so overwhelmed with sorrow over the pitiful destiny of the men of exalted rank and sacred function, as to have no

tears for the forty thousand serfs in the gorges of the Jura, who were held in dead-hand by the Bishop of Saint-Claude?

The simple truth is that Burke did not know enough of the subject about which he was writing. When he said, for instance, that the French before 1789 possessed all the elements of a constitution that might be made nearly as good as could be wished, he said what many of his contemporaries knew, and what all subsequent investigation and meditation have proved, to be recklessly ill-considered and untrue. As to the social state of France, his information was still worse. He saw the dangers and disorders of the new system, but he saw a very little way indeed into the more cruel dangers and disorders of the old. Mackintosh replied to the *Reflections* with manliness and temperance in the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. Thomas Paine replied to them with an energy, courage, and eloquence worthy of his cause, in the *Rights of Man*. But the substantial and decisive reply to Burke came from his former correspondent, the farmer at Bradfield, in Suffolk. Arthur Young published his *Travels in France* some eighteen months after the *Reflections* (1792), and the pages of the twenty-first chapter, in which he closes his performance, as a luminous criticism of the most important side of the Revolution, are worth a hundred times more than Burke, Mackintosh, and Paine all put together. Young afterwards became panic-stricken, but his book remained. There the writer plainly enumerates without trope or invective the intolerable burdens under which the great mass of the French people had for long years been groaning. It was the removal of these burdens that made the very heart's core of the Revolution, and gave to France that new life which so soon astonished and terrified Europe. Yet

Burke seems profoundly unconscious of the whole of them. He even boldly asserts that, when the several orders met in their bailliages in 1789, to choose their representatives and draw up their grievances and instructions, in no one of these instructions did they charge, or even hint at, any of those things which had drawn upon the usurping Assembly the detestation of the rational part of mankind. He could not have made a more enormous blunder. There was not a single great change made by the Assembly which had not been demanded in the lists of grievances that had been sent up by the nation to Versailles. The division of the kingdom into districts, and the proportioning of the representation to taxes and population; the suppression of the intendants; the suppression of all monks, and the sale of their goods and estates; the abolition of feudal rights, duties, and services; the alienation of the King's domains; the demolition of the Bastille; these and all else were in the prayers of half the petitions that the country had laid at the feet of the King.

If this were merely an incidental blunder in a fact, it might be of no importance. But it was a blunder which went to the very root of the discussion. The fact that France was now at the back of the Assembly, inspiring its counsels and ratifying its decrees, was the cardinal element, and that is the fact which at this stage Burke systematically ignored. That he should have so ignored it, left him in a curious position, for it left him without any rational explanation of the sources of the policy which kindled his indignation and contempt. A publicist can never be sure of his position, until he can explain to himself even what he does not wish to justify to others. Burke thought it enough to dwell upon the immense number of lawyers in the Assembly, and to show that

lawyers are naturally bad statesmen. He did not look the state of things steadily in the face. It was no easy thing to do. But Burke was a man who ought to have done it. He set all down to the ignorance, folly, and wickedness of the French leaders. This was as shallow as the way in which his enemies, the philosophers, used to set down the superstition of eighteen centuries to the craft of priests, and all defects in the government of Europe to the cruelty of tyrants. How it came about that priests and tyrants acquired their irresistible power over men's minds, they never inquired. And Burke never inquired into the enthusiastic acquiescence of the nation, and, what was most remarkable of all, the acquiescence of the army, in the strong measures of the Assembly. Burke was, in truth, so appalled by the magnitude of the enterprise on which France had embarked, that he utterly forgot for once the necessity in political affairs, of seriously understanding the originating conditions of things. He was strangely content with the explanations that came from the malignants at Coblenz, and he actually told Francis that he charged the disorders not on the mob, but on the Duke of Orleans and Mirabeau, on Barnave and Bailly, on Lameth and Lafayette, who had spent immense sums of money, and used innumerable arts, to stir up the populace throughout France to the commission of the enormities that were shocking the conscience of Europe. His imagination broke loose. His practical reason was mastered by something that was deeper in him than reason.

This brings me to remark a really singular trait. In spite of the predominance of practical sagacity, of the habits and spirit of public business, of vigorous actuality in Burke's character, yet at the bottom of all his thoughts

about communities and governments there lay a certain mysticism. It was no irony, no literary trope, when he talked of our having taught the American husbandman "piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment." He was using no otiose epithet, when he described the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, "moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race." To him there actually was an element of mystery in the cohesion of men in societies, in political obedience, in the sanctity of contract; in all that fabric of law and charter and obligation, whether written or unwritten, which is the sheltering bulwark between civilization and barbarism. When reason and history had contributed all that they could to the explanation, it seemed to him as if the vital force, the secret of organization, the binding framework, must still come from the impenetrable regions beyond reasoning and beyond history. There was another great conservative writer of that age, whose genius was aroused into a protest against the revolutionary spirit, as vehement as Burke's. This was Joseph de Maistre, one of the most learned, witty, and acute of all reactionary philosophers. De Maistre wrote a book on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions. He could only find this principle in the operation of occult and supernatural forces, producing the half-divine legislators who figure mysteriously in the early history of nations. Hence he held, and with astonishing ingenuity enforced, the doctrine that nothing else could deliver Europe from the Satanic forces of revolution—he used the word Satanic in all literal seriousness—save the divinely inspired supremacy of the Pope. No natural operations seemed at all adequate either to produce or to maintain the marvel of a coherent society. We are reminded of a professor who, in the fantastic days of geol

ogy, explained the Pyramids of Egypt to be the remains of a volcanic eruption, which had forced its way upwards by a slow and stately motion; the hieroglyphs were crystalline formations; and the shaft of the great Pyramid was the air-hole of a volcano. De Maistre preferred a similar explanation of the monstrous structures of modern society. The hand of man could never have reared, and could never uphold them. If we cannot say that Burke laboured in constant travail with the same perplexity, it is at least true that he was keenly alive to it, and that one of the reasons why he dreaded to see a finger laid upon a single stone of a single political edifice, was his consciousness that he saw no answer to the perpetual enigma how any of these edifices had ever been built, and how the passion, violence, and waywardness of the natural man had ever been persuaded to bow their necks to the strong yoke of a common social discipline. Never was mysticism more unseasonable; never was an hour when men needed more carefully to remember Burke's own wise practical precept, when he was talking about the British rule in India, that we must throw a sacred veil over the beginnings of government. Many woes might perhaps have been saved to Europe, if Burke had applied this maxim to the government of the new France.

Much has always been said about the inconsistency between Burke's enmity to the Revolution, and his enmity to Lord North in one set of circumstances, and to Warren Hastings in another. The pamphleteers of the day made selections from the speeches and tracts of his happier time, and the seeming contrast had its effect. More candid opponents admitted then, as all competent persons admit now, that the inconsistency was merely verbal and superficial. Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff, was only one of

many who observed very early that this was the unmistakable temper of Burke's mind. "I admired, as everybody did," he said, "the talents, but not the principles of Mr. Burke; his opposition to the Clerical Petition [for relaxation of subscription, 1772], first excited my suspicion of his being a High-Churchman in religion, and a Tory, perhaps an aristocratic Tory, in the state." Burke had, indeed, never been anything else than a conservative. He was like Falkland, who had bitterly assailed Strafford and Finch on the same principles on which, after the outbreak of the civil war, he consented to be secretary of state to King Charles. Coleridge is borne out by a hundred passages, when he says that in Burke's writings at the beginning of the American Revolution and in those at the beginning of the French Revolution, the principles are the same and the deductions are the same; the practical inferences are almost opposite in the one case from those drawn in the other, yet in both equally legitimate. It would be better to say that they would have been equally legitimate, if Burke had been as right in his facts, and as ample in his knowledge in the case of France, as he was in the case of America. We feel, indeed, that, partly from want of this knowledge, he has gone too far from some of the wise maxims of an earlier time. What has become of the doctrine that all great public collections of men—he was then speaking of the House of Commons—"possess a marked love of virtue and an abhorrence of vice."[1] Why was the French Assembly not to have the benefit of this admirable generalisation? What has become of all those sayings about the presumption, in all disputes between nations and rulers, "being at least upon a par in favour of the people;" and a populace never rebelling from passion for attack, but

[1] *American Taxation.*

from impatience of suffering? And where is now that strong dictum, in the letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, that "general rebellions and revolts of a whole people never were *encouraged*, now or at any time; they are always *provoked*?"

When all these things have been noted, to hold a man to his formulæ without reference to their special application, is pure pedantry. Burke was the last man to lay down any political proposition not subject to the ever varying interpretation of circumstances, and independently of the particular use which was to be made of it. Nothing universal, he had always said, can be rationally affirmed on any moral or political subject. The lines of morality, again, are never ideal lines of mathematics, but are broad and deep as well as long, admitting of exceptions, and demanding modifications. "These exceptions and modifications are made, not by the process of logic, but by the rules of prudence. Prudence is not only first in rank of the virtues, political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all. As no moral questions are ever abstract questions, this, before I judge upon any abstract proposition, must be embodied in circumstances; for, since things are right and wrong, morally speaking, only by their relation and connection with other things, this very question of what it is politically right to grant, depends upon its relation to its effects." "Circumstances," he says, never weary of laying down his great notion of political method, "give, in reality, to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or obnoxious to mankind."

This is at once the weapon with which he would have defended his own consistency, and attacked the absolute

proceedings in France. He changed his front, but he never changed his ground. He was not more passionate against the proscription in France than he had been against the suspension of Habeas Corpus in the American war. "I flatter myself," he said in the *Reflections*, "that I love a manly, moral, regulated liberty." Ten years before he had said, "The liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with order." The court tried to regulate liberty too severely. It found in him an inflexible opponent. Demagogues tried to remove the regulations of liberty. They encountered in him the bitterest and most unceasing of all remonstrants. The arbitrary majority in the House of Commons forgot for whose benefit they held power, from whom they derived their authority, and in what description of government it was that they had a place. Burke was the most valiant and strenuous champion in the ranks of the independent minority. He withstood to the face the King and the King's friends. He withstood to the face Charles Fox and the Friends of the People. He may have been wrong in both, or in either, but it is unreasonable to tell us that he turned back in his course; that he was a revolutionist in 1770, and a reactionist in 1790; that he was in his sane mind when he opposed the supremacy of the Court, but that his reason was tottering when he opposed the supremacy of the Faubourg Saint Antoine.

There is no part of Burke's career at which we may not find evidence of his instinctive and undying repugnance to the critical or revolutionary spirit and all its works. From the early days when he had parodied Bolingbroke, down to the later time when he denounced Condorcet as a fanatical atheist, with "every disposition to the lowest as well as the highest and most determined villanies," he invariably suspected or denounced everybody, virtuous or vicious,

high-minded or ignoble, who inquired with too keen a scrutiny into the foundations of morals, of religion, of social order. To examine with a curious or unfavourable eye the bases of established opinions, was to show a leaning to anarchy, to atheism, or to unbridled libertinism. Already we have seen how, three years after the publication of his *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, and seventeen years before the composition of the *Reflections*, he denounced the philosophers with a fervour and a vehemence which he never afterwards surpassed. When some of the clergy petitioned to be relieved from some of the severities of subscription, he had resisted them on the bold ground that the truth of a proposition deserves less attention than the effect of adherence to it upon the established order of things. "I will not enter into the question," he told the House of Commons, "how much truth is preferable to peace. Perhaps truth may be far better. But as we have scarcely ever the same certainty in the one that we have in the other, I would, unless the truth were evident indeed, hold fast to peace." In that intellectual restlessness, to which the world is so deeply indebted, Burke could recognize but scanty merit. Himself the most industrious and active-minded of men, he was ever sober in cutting the channels of his activity, and he would have had others equally moderate. Perceiving that plain and righteous conduct is the end of life in this world, he prayed men not to be over-curious in searching for, and handling, and again handling, the theoretic base on which the prerogatives of virtue repose. Provided that there was peace, that is to say, so much of fair happiness and content as is compatible with the conditions of the human lot, Burke felt that a too great inquisitiveness as to its foundations was not only idle but cruel.

If the world continues to read the *Reflections*, and reads it with a new admiration that is not diminished by the fact that on the special issue its tendency is every day more clearly discerned to have been misleading, we may be sure that it is not for the sake of such things as the precise character of the Revolution of 1688, where, for that matter, constitutional writers have shown abundantly that Burke was nearly as much in the wrong as Dr. Sacheverell. Nor has the book lived merely by its gorgeous rhetoric and high emotions, though these have been contributing elements. It lives because it contains a sentiment, a method, a set of informal principles, which, awakened into new life after the Revolution, rapidly transformed the current ways of thinking and feeling about all the most serious objects of our attention, and have powerfully helped to give a richer substance to all modern literature. In the *Reflections* we have the first great sign that the ideas on government and philosophy which Locke had been the chief agent in setting into European circulation, and which had carried all triumphantly before them throughout the century, did not comprehend the whole truth nor the deepest truth about human character—the relations of men and the union of men in society. It has often been said that the armoury from which the French philosophers of the eighteenth century borrowed their weapons was furnished from England, and it may be added as truly that the reaction against that whole scheme of thought came from England. In one sense we may call the *Reflections* a political pamphlet, but it is much more than this, just as the movement against which it was levelled was much more than a political movement. The Revolution rested on a philosophy, and Burke confronted it with an antagonistic philosophy. Those are but superficial readers who fail to

see at how many points Burke, while seeming only to deal with the French monarchy and the British constitution, with Dr. Price and Marie Antoinette, was in fact, and exactly because he dealt with them in the comprehensive spirit of true philosophy, turning men's minds to an attitude from which not only the political incidents of the hour, but the current ideas about religion, psychology, the very nature of human knowledge, would all be seen in a changed light and clothed in new colour. All really profound speculation about society comes in time to touch the heart of every other object of speculation, not by directly contributing new truths or directly corroborating old ones, but by setting men to consider the consequences to life of different opinions on these abstract subjects, and their relations to the great paramount interests of society, however those interests may happen at the time to be conceived. Burke's book marks a turning-point in literary history, because it was the signal for that reaction over the whole field of thought, into which the Revolution drove many of the finest minds of the next generation, by showing the supposed consequences of pure individualistic rationalism.

We need not attempt to work out the details of this extension of a political reaction into a universal reaction in philosophy and poetry. Any one may easily think out for himself what consequences in act and thought, as well as in government, would be likely to flow, for example, from one of the most permanently admirable sides of Burke's teaching—his respect for the collective reason of men, and his sense of the impossibility in politics and morals of considering the individual apart from the experience of the race. "We are afraid," he says, "to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that this stock in each man is

small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. *Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them.* If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason: because prejudice with its reason has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, sceptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature." Is not this to say, in other words, that in every man the substantial foundations of action consist of the accumulated layers which various generations of ancestors have placed for him; that the greater part of our sentiments act most effectively when they act most mechanically, and by the methods of an unquestioned system; that although no rule of conduct or spring of action ought to endure which does not repose in sound reason, yet this naked reason is in itself a less effective means of influencing action than when it exists as one part of a fabric of ancient and endeared association? Interpreted by a mobile genius and expanded by a poetic imagination, all this became the foundation from which the philosophy of Coleridge started, and, as Mill has shown in a famous essay, Coleridge was the great apostle of the conservative spirit in England in its best form.

Though Burke here, no doubt, found a true base for the philosophy of order, yet perhaps Condorcet or Barnave might have justly asked him whether, when we thus realize the strong and immovable foundations which are laid in our character before we are born, there could be any occasion, as a matter of fact, for that vehement alarm which moved Burke lest a few lawyers, by a score of parchment decrees, should overthrow the venerated sentiments of Europe about justice and about property? Should he not have known better than most men the force of the self-protecting elements of society?

This is not a convenient place for discussing the issues between the school of order and the school of progress. It is enough to have marked Burke's position in one of them. The *Reflections* places him among the great Conservatives of history. Perhaps the only Englishman with whom in this respect he may be compared is Sir Thomas More, that virtuous and eloquent reactionist of the sixteenth century. More abounded in light, in intellectual interests, in single-minded care for the common weal. He was as anxious as any man of his time for the improved ordering of the Church, but he could not endure that reformation should be bought at the price of breaking up the ancient spiritual unity of Europe. He was willing to slay and be slain rather than he would tolerate the destruction of the old faith, or assent to the violence of the new statecraft. He viewed Thomas Cromwell's policy of reformation just as Burke viewed Mirabeau's policy of revolution. Burke too, we may be very sure, would as willingly have sent Mirabeau and Bailly to prison or the block as More sent Phillips to the Tower and Bainham to the stake. For neither More nor Burke was of the gentle contemplative spirit, which the first disorder of a new so-

ciety just bursting into life merely overshadows with saddening regrets and poetic gloom. The old harmony was to them so bound up with the purpose and meaning of life, that to wage active battle for the gods of their reverence was the irresistible instinct of self-preservation. More had an excuse which Burke had not, for the principle of persecution was accepted by the best minds of the sixteenth century, but by the best minds of the eighteenth it was emphatically repudiated.

Another illustrious name of Burke's own era rises to our lips, as we ponder mentally the too scanty list of those who have essayed the great and hardy task of reconciling order with progress. Turgot is even a more imposing figure than Burke himself. The impression made upon us by the pair is indeed very different, for Turgot was austere, reserved, distant, a man of many silences, and much suspense; while Burke, as we know, was imaginative, exuberant, unrestrained, and, like some of the greatest actors on the stage of human affairs, he had associated his own personality with the prevalence of right ideas and good influences. In Turgot, on the other hand, we discern something of the isolation, the sternness, the disdainful melancholy of Tacitus. He even rises out of the eager, bustling, shrill-tongued crowd of the Voltairean age with some of that austere moral indignation and haughty astonishment with which Dante had watched the stubborn ways of men centuries before. On one side Turgot shared the conservatism of Burke, though, perhaps, he would hardly have given it that name. He habitually corrected the headlong insistence of the revolutionary philosophers, his friends, by reminding them that neither pity, nor benevolence, nor hope can ever dispense with justice; and he could never endure to hear of great changes being

wrought at the cost of this sovereign quality. Like Burke, he held fast to the doctrine that everything must be done for the multitude, but nothing by them. Like Burke, he realized how close are the links that bind the successive generations of men, and make up the long chain of human history. Like Burke, he never believed that the human mind has any spontaneous inclination to welcome pure truth. Here, however, is visible between them a hard line of division. It is not error, said Turgot, which opposes the progress of truth; it is indolence, obstinacy, and the spirit of routine. But then Turgot enjoined upon us to make it the aim of life to do battle in ourselves and others with all this indolence, obstinacy, and spirit of routine in the world; while Burke, on the contrary, gave to these bad things gentler names, he surrounded them with the picturesque associations of the past, and in the great world-crisis of his time he threw all his passion and all his genius on their side. Will any reader doubt which of these two types of the school of order and justice, both of them noble, is the more valuable for the race, and the worthier and more stimulating ideal for the individual?

It is not certain that Burke was not sometimes for a moment startled by the suspicion that he might unawares be fighting against the truth. In the midst of flaming and bitter pages, we now and again feel a cool breath from the distant region of a half-pensive tolerance. "I do not think," he says at the close of the *Reflections*, to the person to whom they were addressed, "that my sentiments are likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young; you cannot guide, but must follow, the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly re-

main; but before its final settlement, it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, 'through great varieties of untried being,' and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood."

He felt in the midst of his hate that what he took for seething chaos might after all be the struggle upwards of the germs of order. Among the later words that he wrote on the Revolution were these: "If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope, will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself than the mere designs of men." We can only regret that these rays of the *mens divinior* did not shine with a more steadfast light; and that a spirit which, amid the sharp press of manifold cares and distractions, had ever vibrated with lofty sympathies, was not now more constant to its faith in the beneficent powers and processes of the Unseen Time.

CHAPTER IX.

BURKE AND HIS PARTY—PROGRESS OF THE REVOLUTION—IRELAND—LAST YEARS.

For some months after the publication of the *Reflections*, Burke kept up the relations of an armed peace with his old political friends. The impeachment went on, and in December (1790) there was a private meeting on the business connected with it, between Pitt, Burke, Fox, and Dundas, at the house of the Speaker. It was described by one who knew as most snug and amiable, and there seems to have been a general impression in the world at this moment that Fox might by some means be induced to join Pitt. What troubled the slumbers of good Whigs like Gilbert Elliot was the prospect of Fox committing himself too strongly on French affairs. Burke himself was in the deepest dejection at the prospect; for Fox did not cease to express the most unqualified disapproval of the *Reflections;* he thought that, even in point of composition, it was the worst thing that Burke had ever published. It was already feared that his friendship for Sheridan was drawing him further away from Burke, with whom Sheridan had quarrelled, into a course of politics that would both damage his own reputation, and break up the strong union of which the Duke of Portland was the nominal head.

New floods in France had not yet carried back the ship

of state into raging waters. Pitt was thinking so little of danger from that country, that he had plunged into a policy of intervention in the affairs of eastern Europe. When writers charge Burke with breaking violently in upon Pitt's system of peace abroad and reform at home, they overlook the fact that before Burke had begun to preach his crusade against the Jacobins, Pitt had already prepared a war with Russia. The nation refused to follow. They agreed with Fox that it was no concern of theirs whether or not Russia took from Turkey the country between the Boug and Dniester; they felt that British interests would be more damaged by the expenses of a war than by the acquisition by Russia of Ockzakow. Pitt was obliged to throw up the scheme, and to extricate himself as well as he could from rash engagements with Prussia. It was on account of his services to the cause of peace on this occasion that Catharine ordered the Russian ambassador to send her a bust of Fox in white marble, to be placed in her colonnade between Demosthenes and Cicero. We may take it for granted that after the Revolution rose to its full height, the bust of Fox accompanied that of Voltaire down to the cellar of the Hermitage.

While the affair of the Russian armament was still occupying the minister, an event of signal importance happened in the ranks of his political adversaries. The alliance which had lasted between Burke and Fox for five-and-twenty years came to a sudden end, and this rift gradually widened into a destructive breach throughout the party. There is no parallel in our parliamentary history to the fatal scene. In Ireland, indeed, only eight years before, Flood and Grattan, after fighting side by side for many years, had all at once sprung upon one another in the Parliament House with the fury of vultures: Flood had

screamed to Grattan that he was a mendicant patriot, and Grattan had called Flood an ill-omened bird of night, with a sepulchral note, a cadaverous aspect, and a broken beak. The Irish, like the French, have the art of making things dramatic, and Burke was the greatest of Irishmen. On the opening of the session of 1791, the government had introduced a bill for the better government of Canada. It introduced questions about church establishments and hereditary legislators. In discussing these, Fox made some references to France. It was impossible to refer to France without touching the *Reflections on the French Revolution.* Burke was not present, but he heard what Fox had said, and before long Fox again introduced French affairs in a debate on the Russian armament. Burke rose in violent heat of mind to reply, but the House would not hear him. He resolved to speak when the time came for the Canada Bill to be recommitted. Meanwhile some of his friends did all that they could to dissuade him from pressing the matter further. Even the Prince of Wales is said to have written him a letter. There were many signs of the rupture that was so soon to come in the Whig ranks. Men so equally devoted to the common cause as Windham and Elliot nearly came to a quarrel at a dinner-party at Lord Malmesbury's, on the subject of Burke's design to speak; and Windham, who for the present sided with Fox, enters in his diary that he was glad to escape from the room without speaking to the man whom, since the death of Dr. Johnson, he revered before all others.

On the day appointed for the Canada Bill, Fox called at Burke's house, and after some talk on Burke's intention to speak, and on other matters, they walked down to Westminster and entered the House together, as they had so many a time done before, but were never to do again.

They found that the debate had been adjourned, and it was not until May 6th that Burke had an opportunity of explaining himself on the Revolution in France. He had no sooner risen, than interruptions broke out from his own side, and a scene of great disorder followed. Burke was incensed beyond endurance by this treatment, for even Fox and Windham had taken part in the tumult against him. With much bitterness he commented on Fox's previous eulogies of the Revolution, and finally there came the fatal words of severance. "It is indiscreet," he said, "at any period, but especially at my time of life, to provoke enemies, or give my friends occasion to desert me. Yet if my firm and steady adherence to the British Constitution place me in such a dilemma, I am ready to risk it, and with my last words to exclaim, 'Fly from the French Constitution.'" Fox at this point eagerly called to him that there was no loss of friends. "Yes, yes," cried Burke, "there is a loss of friends. I know the price of my conduct. I have done my duty at the price of my friend. Our friendship is at an end."

The members who sat on the same side were aghast at proceedings which went beyond their worst apprehensions. Even the ministerialists were shocked. Pitt agreed much more with Fox than with Burke, but he would have been more than human if he had not watched with complacency his two most formidable adversaries turning their swords against one another. Wilberforce, who was more disinterested, lamented the spectacle as shameful. In the galleries there was hardly a dry eye. Fox, as might have been expected from his warm and generous nature, was deeply moved, and is described as weeping even to sobbing. He repeated his former acknowledgment of his debt to Burke, and he repeated his former expression of

faith in the blessings which the abolition of royal despotism would bring to France. With unabated vehemence Burke again rose to denounce the French Constitution—"a building composed of untempered mortar—the work of Goths and Vandals, where everything was disjointed and inverted." After a short rejoinder from Fox, the scene came to a close, and the once friendly intercourse between the two heroes was at an end. When they met in the Managers' box in Westminster Hall on the business of Hastings's trial, they met with the formalities of strangers. There is a story that when Burke left the House on the night of the quarrel it was raining, and Mr. Curwen, a member of the Opposition, took him home in his carriage. Burke at once began to declaim against the French. Curwen dropped some remark on the other side. "What!" Burke cried out, grasping the check-string, "are you one of these people! Set me down." It needed all Curwen's force to keep him where he was; and when they reached his house, Burke stepped out without saying a single word.

We may agree that all this did not indicate the perfect sobriety and self-control proper to a statesman, in what was a serious crisis both to his party and to Europe. It was about this time that Burke said to Addington, who was then Speaker of the House of Commons, that he was not well. "I eat too much, Speaker," he said, "I drink too much, and I sleep too little." It is even said that he felt the final breach with Fox as a relief from unendurable suspense; and he quoted the lines about Æneas, after he had finally resolved to quit Dido and the Carthaginian shore, at last being able to snatch slumber in his ship's tall stern. There can be no doubt how severe had been the tension. Yet the performance to which Burke now ap-

plied himself is one of the gravest and most reasonable of all his compositions. He felt it necessary to vindicate the fundamental consistency between his present and his past. We have no difficulty in imagining the abuse to which he was exposed from those whose abuse gave him pain. In a country governed by party, a politician who quits the allies of a lifetime must expect to pay the penalty. The Whig papers told him that he was expected to surrender his seat in Parliament. They imputed to him all sorts of sinister motives. His name was introduced into ironical toasts. For a whole year there was scarcely a member of his former party who did not stand aloof from him. Windham, when the feeling was at its height, sent word to a host that he would rather not meet Burke at dinner. Dr. Parr, though he thought Mr. Burke the greatest man upon earth, declared himself most indignantly and most fixedly on the side of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox. The Duke of Portland, though always described as strongly and fondly attached to him, and Gilbert Elliot, who thought that Burke was right in his views on the Revolution, and right in expressing them, still could not forgive the open catastrophe, and for many months all the old habits of intimacy among them were entirely broken off.

Burke did not bend to the storm. He went down to Margate, and there finished the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.* Meanwhile he dispatched his son to Coblenz to give advice to the royalist exiles, who were then mainly in the hands of Calonne, one of the very worst of the ministers whom Louis XVI. had tried between his dismissal of Turgot in 1774, and the meeting of the States-General in 1789. This measure was taken at the request of Calonne, who had visited Burke at Margate. The English government did not disapprove of it, though

they naturally declined to invest either young Burke or any one else with authority from themselves. As little came of the mission as might have been expected from the frivolous, unmanly, and enraged spirit of those to whom it was addressed.

In August (1791), while Richard Burke was at Coblenz, the *Appeal* was published. This was the last piece that Burke wrote on the Revolution, in which there is any pretence of measure, sobriety, and calm judgment in face of a formidable and perplexing crisis. Henceforth it is not political philosophy, but the minatory exhortation of a prophet. We deal no longer with principles and ideas, but with a partisan denunciation of particular acts, and a partisan incitement to a given practical policy. We may appreciate the policy as we choose, but our appreciation of Burke as a thinker and a contributor to political wisdom is at an end. He is now only Demosthenes thundering against Philip, or Cicero shrieking against Mark Antony.

The *Reflections* had not been published many months before Burke wrote the *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (January, 1791), in which strong disapproval had grown into furious hatred. It contains the elaborate diatribe against Rousseau, the grave panegyric on Cromwell for choosing Hale to be Chief Justice, and a sound criticism on the laxity and want of foresight in the manner in which the States-General had been convened. Here first Burke advanced to the position that it might be the duty of other nations to interfere to restore the King to his rightful authority, just as England and Prussia had interfered to save Holland from confusion, as they had interfered to preserve the hereditary constitution in the Austrian Netherlands, and as Prussia had interfered to snatch even the malignant and the turban'd Turk from the pounce

of the Russian eagle. Was not the King of France as much an object of policy and compassion as the Grand Seignior? As this was the first piece in which Burke hinted at a crusade, so it was the first in which he began to heap upon the heads, not of Hébert, Fouquier-Tinville, Billaud, nor even of Robespierre or Danton—for none of these had yet been heard of—but of able and conscientious men in the Constituent Assembly, language of a virulence which Fox once said seriously that Burke had picked, even to the phrases of it, out of the writings of Salmasius against Milton, but which is really only to be paralleled by the much worse language of Milton against Salmasius. It was in truth exactly the kind of incensed speech which, at a later date, the factions in Paris levelled against one another, when Girondins screamed for the heads of Jacobins, and Robespierre denounced Danton, and Tallien cried for the blood of Robespierre.

Burke declined most wisely to suggest any plan for the National Assembly. "Permit me to say"—this is in the letter of January, 1791, to a member of the Assembly—"that if I were as confident as I ought to be diffident in my own loose general ideas, I never should venture to broach them, if but at twenty leagues' distance from the centre of your affairs. I must see with my own eyes; I must in a manner touch with my own hands, not only the fixed, but momentary circumstances, before I could venture to suggest any political project whatsoever. I must know the power and disposition to accept, to execute, to persevere. I must see all the aids and all the obstacles. I must see the means of correcting the plan, where correctives would be wanted. I must see the things: I must see the men. Without a concurrence and adaptation of these to the design, the very best speculative projects

might become not only useless but mischievous. Plans must be made for men. People at a distance must judge ill of men. They do not always answer to their reputation when you approach them. Nay, the perspective varies, and shows them quite other than you thought them. At a distance, if we judge uncertainly of men, we must judge worse of *opportunities*, which continually vary their shapes and colours, and pass away like clouds." Our admiration at such words is quickly stifled when we recall the confident, unsparing, immoderate criticism which both preceded and followed this truly rational exposition of the danger of advising, in cases where we know neither the men nor the opportunities. Why was savage and unfaltering denunciation any less unbecoming than, as he admits, crude prescriptions would have been unbecoming?

By the end of 1791, when he wrote the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, he had penetrated still further into the essential character of the Revolution. Any notion of a reform to be effected after the decorous pattern of 1688, so conspicuous in the first great manifesto, had wholly disappeared. The changes in France he allowed to bear little resemblance or analogy to any of those which had been previously brought about in Europe. It is a revolution, he said, of doctrine and theoretic dogma. The Reformation was the last revolution of this sort which had happened in Europe; and he immediately goes on to remark a point of striking resemblance between them. The effect of the Reformation was "to introduce other interests into all countries than those which arose from their locality and natural circumstances." In like manner other sources of faction were now opened, combining parties among the inhabitants of different countries into a single connection. From these sources, effects were likely to arise fully as im-

portant as those which had formerly arisen from the jarring interests of the religious sects. It is a species of faction which "breaks the locality of public affections."[1]

He was thus launched on the full tide of his policy. The French Revolution must be hemmed in by a cordon of fire. Those who sympathised with it in England must be gagged, and if gagging did not suffice, they must be taught respect for the constitution in dungeons and on the gallows. His cry for war abroad and arbitrary tyranny at home waxed louder every day. As Fox said, it was lucky that Burke took the royal side in the Revolution, for his violence would certainly have got him hanged if he had happened to take the other side.

It was in the early summer of 1792 that Miss Burney again met Burke at Mrs. Crewe's villa at Hampstead. He entered into an animated conversation on Lord Macartney and the Chinese expedition, reviving all the old enthusiasm of his companion by his allusions and anecdotes, his brilliant fancies and wide information. When politics were introduced, he spoke with an eagerness and a vehemence that instantly banished the graces, though it redoubled the energies of his discourse. "How I wish," Miss Burney writes, "that you could meet this wonderful man when he is easy, happy, and with people he cordially likes. But politics, even on his own side, must always be excluded;

[1] De Tocqueville has unconsciously imitated Burke's very phrases. "Toutes les révolutions civiles et politiques ont eu une patrie, et s'y sont enfermées. La Révolution française . . . on l'a vue rapprocher ou diviser les hommes en dépit des lois, des traditions, des caractères, de langue, rendant parfois ennemis des compatriotes, et frères des étrangers; *ou plutôt elle a formé audessus de toutes les nationalités particulières, une patrie intellectuelle commune dont les hommes de toutes les nations ont pu devenir citoyens.*"—Ancien Régime, p. 15.

his irritability is so terrible on that theme, that it gives immediately to his face *the expression of a man who is going to defend himself from murderers.*"

Burke still remained without a following, but the ranks of his old allies gradually began to show signs of wavering. His panic about the Jacobins within the gates slowly spread. His old faith, about which he had once talked so much, in the ancient rustic, manly, home-bred sense of the English people, he dismissed as if it had been some idle dream that had come to him through the ivory gate. His fine comparison of the nation to a majestic herd, browsing in peace amid the importunate chirrupings of a thousand crickets, became so little appropriate, that he was now beside himself with apprehension that the crickets were about to rend the oxen in pieces. Even then the herd stood tranquilly in their pastures, only occasionally turning a dull eye, now to France, and now to Burke. In the autumn of 1791, Burke dined with Pitt and Lord Grenville, and he found them resolute for an honest neutrality in the affairs of France, and "quite out of all apprehensions of any effect from the French Revolution in this kingdom, either at present or any time to come." Francis and Sheridan, it is true, spoke as if they almost wished for a domestic convulsion; and cool observers who saw him daily, even accused Sheridan of wishing to stir up the lower ranks of the people by the hope of plundering their betters. But men who afterwards became alarmists are found, so late as the spring of 1792, declaring in their most confidential correspondence that the party of confusion made no way with the country, and produced no effect. Horne Tooke was its most conspicuous chief, and nobody pretended to fear the subversion of the realm by Horne Tooke. Yet Burke, in letters where he admits that

the democratic party is entirely discountenanced, and that the Jacobin faction in England is under a heavy cloud, was so possessed by the spectre of panic, as to declare that the Duke of Brunswick was as much fighting the battle of the crown of England as the Duke of Cumberland fought that battle at Culloden.

Time and events, meanwhile, had been powerfully telling for Burke. While he was writing his *Appeal*, the French King and Queen had destroyed whatever confidence sanguine dreamers might have had in their loyalty to the new order of things, by attempting to escape over the frontier. They were brought back, and a manful attempt was made to get the new constitution to work, in the winter of 1791–92. It was soon found out that Mirabeau had been right, when he said that for a monarchy it was too democratic, and for a republic there was a king too much. This was Burke's *Reflections* in a nutshell. But it was foreign intervention that finally ruined the King, and destroyed the hope of an orderly issue. Frederick the Great had set the first example of what some call iniquity and violence in Europe, and others in milder terms call a readjustment of the equilibrium of nations. He had taken Silesia from the House of Austria, and he had shared in the first partition of Poland. Catharine II. had followed him at the expense of Poland, Sweden, and Turkey. However we may view these transactions, and whether we describe them by the stern words of the moralist, or the more deprecatory words of the diplomatist, they are the first sources of that storm of lawless rapine which swept over every part of Europe for five-and-twenty years to come. The intervention of Austria and Prussia in the affairs of France was originally less a deliberate design for the benefit of the old order than an

interlude in the intrigues of eastern Europe. But the first effect of intervention on behalf of the French monarchy was to bring it in a few weeks to the ground.

In the spring of 1792 France replied to the preparations of Austria and Prussia for invasion by a declaration of war. It was inevitable that the French people should associate the court with the foreign enemy that was coming to its deliverance. Everybody knew as well then as we know it now, that the Queen was as bitterly incensed against the new order of things, and as resolutely unfaithful to it, as the most furious emigrant on the Rhine. Even Burke himself, writing to his son at Coblenz, was constrained to talk about Marie Antoinette as that "most unfortunate woman, who was not to be cured of the spirit of court intrigue even by a prison." The King may have been loyally resigned to his position, but resignation will not defend a country from the invader; and the nation distrusted a chief who only a few months before had been arrested in full flight to join the national enemy. Power naturally fell into the hands of the men of conviction, energy, passion, and resource. Patriotism and republicanism became synonymous, and the constitution against which Burke had prophesied was henceforth a dead letter. The spirit of insurrection that had slumbered since the fall of the Bastille and the march to Versailles in 1789, now awoke in formidable violence, and after the preliminary rehearsal of what is known in the revolutionary calendar as the 20th of June (1792), the people of Paris responded to the Duke of Brunswick's insensate manifesto by the more memorable day of the 10th of August. Brunswick, accepting the hateful language which the French emigrants put into his mouth, had declared that every member of the national guard taken with arms in his hands would be im-

mediately put to death; that every inhabitant who should dare to defend himself, would be put to death and his house burnt to the ground; and that if the least insult was offered to the royal family, then their Austrian and Prussian majesties would deliver Paris to military execution and total destruction. This is the vindictive ferocity which only civil war can kindle. To convince men that the manifesto was not an empty threat, on the day of its publication a force of nearly 140,000 Austrians, Prussians, and Hessians entered France. The sections of Paris replied by marching to the Tuileries, and after a furious conflict with the Swiss guards, they stormed the chateau. The King and his family had fled to the National Assembly. The same evening they were thrown into prison, whence the King and Queen only came out on their way to the scaffold.

It was the King's execution in January, 1793, that finally raised feeling in England to the intense heat which Burke had for so long been craving. The evening on which the courier brought the news was never forgotten by those who were in London at the time. The playhouses were instantly closed, and the audiences insisted on retiring with half the amusement for which they had paid. People of the lowest and the highest rank alike put on mourning. The French were universally denounced as fiends upon earth. It was hardly safe for a Frenchman to appear in the streets of London. Placards were posted on every wall, calling for war, and the crowds who gathered round them read them with loud hurrahs.

It would be a great mistake to say that Pitt ever lost his head, but he lost his feet. The momentary passion of the nation forced him out of the pacific path in which he

would have chosen to stay. Burke had become the greatest power in the country, and was in closer communication with the ministers than any one out of office. He went once about this time with Windham and Elliot, to inform Pitt as to the uneasiness of the public about the slackness of our naval and military preparation. "Burke," says one of the party, "gave Pitt a little political instruction in a very respectful and cordial way, but with the authority of an old and most informed statesman, and although nobody ever takes the whole of Burke's advice, yet he often, or always rather, furnishes very important and useful matter, some part of which sticks and does good. Pitt took it all very patiently and cordially."

It was in the December of 1792 that Burke had enacted that famous bit of melodrama out of place, known as the Dagger Scene. The Government had brought in an Alien Bill, imposing certain pains and restrictions on foreigners coming to this country. Fox denounced it as a concession to foolish alarms, and was followed by Burke, who began to storm as usual against murderous atheists. Then, without due preparation, he began to fumble in his bosom, suddenly drew out a dagger, and with an extravagant gesture threw it on the floor of the House, crying that this was what they had to expect from their alliance with France. The stroke missed its mark, and there was a general inclination to titter, until Burke, collecting himself for an effort, called upon them with a vehemence to which his listeners could not choose but respond, to keep French principles from their heads, and French daggers from their hearts; to preserve all their blandishments in life, and all their consolations in death; all the blessings of time, and all the hopes of eternity. All this was not prepared long beforehand, for it seems that the dagger had only been

shown to Burke on his way to the House, as one that had been sent to Birmingham to be a pattern for a large order. Whether prepared or unprepared, the scene was one from which we gladly avert our eyes.

Negotiations had been going on for some months, and they continued in various stages for some months longer, for a coalition between the two great parties of the state. Burke was persistently anxious that Fox should join Pitt's government. Pitt always admitted the importance of Fox's abilities in the difficult affairs which lay before the ministry, and declared that he had no sort of personal animosity to Fox, but rather a personal good-will and good-liking. Fox himself said of a coalition, "It is so damned right, to be sure, that I cannot help thinking it must be." But the difficulties were insuperable. The more rapidly the government drifted in Burke's direction, the more impossible was it for a man of Fox's political sympathies and convictions to have any dealings with a cabinet committed to a policy of irrational panic, to be carried out by a costly war abroad and cruel repression at home. "*What a very wretched man!*" was Burke's angry exclamation one day, when it became certain that Fox meant to stand by the old flag of freedom and generous common-sense.

When the coalition at length took place (1794), the only man who carried Burke's principles to their fullest extent into Pitt's cabinet was Windham. It is impossible not to feel the attraction of Windham's character, his amiability, his reverence for great and virtuous men, his passion for knowledge, the versatility of his interests. He is a striking example of the fact that literature was a common pursuit and occupation to the chief statesmen of that time (always excepting Pitt), to an extent that has been gradually tending to become rarer. Windham, in the

midst of his devotion to public affairs, to the business of his country, and, let us add, a zealous attendance on every prize-fight within reach, was never happy unless he was working up points in literature and mathematics. There was a literary and classical spirit abroad, and in spite of the furious preoccupations of faction a certain ready disengagement of mind prevailed. If Windham and Fox began to talk of horses, they seemed to fall naturally into what had been said about horses by the old writers. Fox held that long ears were a merit, and Windham met him by the authority of Xenophon and Oppian in favour of short ones, and finally they went off into what it was that Virgil meant, when he called a horse's head *argutum caput.* Burke and Windham travelled in Scotland together in 1785, and their conversation fell as often on old books as on Hastings or on Pitt. They discussed Virgil's similes; Johnson and L'Estrange, as the extremes of English style; what Stephens and A. Gellius had to say about Cicero's use of the word *gratiosus.* If they came to libraries, Windham ran into them with eagerness, and very strongly enjoyed all "the *feel* that a library usually excites." He is constantly reproaching himself with a remissness, which was purely imaginary, in keeping up his mathematics, his Greek tragedies, his Latin historians. There is no more curious example of the remorse of a bookman impeded by affairs. "What progress might men make in the several parts of knowledge," he says very truly, in one of these moods, "if they could only pursue them with the same eagerness and assiduity as are exerted by lawyers in the conduct of a suit." But this distraction between the tastes of the bookman and the pursuits of public business, united with a certain quality of his constitution to produce one great defect in his character,

and it was the worst defect that a statesman can have. He became the most irresolute and vacillating of men. He wastes the first half of a day in deciding which of two courses to take, and the second half in blaming himself for not having taken the other. He is constantly late at entertainments, because he cannot make up his mind in proper time whether to go or to stay at home; hesitation whether he shall read in the red room or in the library, loses him three of the best hours of a morning; the difficulty of early rising he finds to consist less in rising early, than in satisfying himself that the practice is wholesome; his mind is torn for a whole forenoon in an absurd contest with himself, whether he ought to indulge a strong wish to exercise his horse before dinner. Every page of his diary is a register of the symptoms of this unhappy disease. When the Revolution came, he was absolutely forced by the iron necessity of the case, after certain perturbations, to go either with Fox or with Burke. Under this compulsion he took one headlong plunge into the policy of alarm. Everybody knows how desperately an habitually irresolute man is capable of clinging to a policy or a conviction to which he has once been driven by dire stress of circumstance. Windham having at last made up his mind to be frightened by the Revolution, was more violently and inconsolably frightened than anybody else.

Pitt, after he had been forced into war, at least intended it to be a war on the good old-fashioned principles of seizing the enemy's colonies and keeping them. He was taunted by the alarmists with caring only for sugar islands, and making himself master of all the islands in the world except Great Britain and Ireland. To Burke all this was an abomination, and Windham followed Burke to the letter. He even declared the holy rage of the *Fourth*

Letter on a Regicide Peace, published after Burke's death, to contain the purest wisdom and the most unanswerable policy. It was through Windham's eloquence and perseverance that the monstrous idea of a crusade, and all Burke's other violent and excited precepts, gained an effective place and hearing in the cabinet, in the royal closet, and in the House of Commons, long after Burke himself had left the scene.

We have already seen how important an element Irish affairs became in the war with America. The same spirit which had been stirred by the American war was inevitably kindled in Ireland by the French Revolution. The association of United Irishmen now came into existence, with aims avowedly revolutionary. They joined the party which was striving for the relief of the Catholics from certain disabilities, and for their admission to the franchise. Burke had watched all movements in his native country, from the Whiteboy insurrection of 1761 downwards, with steady vigilance, and he watched the new movement of 1792 with the keenest eyes. It made him profoundly uneasy. He could not endure the thought of ever so momentary and indirect an association with a revolutionary party, either in Ireland or any other quarter of the globe, yet he was eager for a policy which should reconcile the Irish. He was so for two reasons. One of them was his political sense of the inexpediency of proscribing men by whole nations, and excluding from the franchise on the ground of religion a people as numerous as the subjects of the King of Denmark or the King of Sardinia, equal to the population of the United Netherlands, and larger than were to be found in all the States of Switzerland. His second reason was his sense of the urgency of facing trouble abroad with a nation united and contented at home;

of abolishing in the heart of the country that "bank of discontent, every hour accumulating, upon which every description of seditious men may draw at pleasure."

In the beginning of 1792, Burke's son went to Dublin as the agent and adviser of the Catholic Committee, who at first listened to him with the respect due to one in whom they expected to find the qualities of his father. They soon found out that he was utterly without either tact or judgment; that he was arrogant, impertinent, vain, and empty. Wolfe Tone declared him to be by far the most impudent and opinionative fellow that he had ever known in his life. Nothing could exceed the absurdity of his conduct, and on one occasion he had a very narrow escape of being taken into custody by the Serjeant-at-arms, for rushing down from the gallery into the Irish House of Commons, and attempting to make a speech in defence of a petition which he had drawn up, and which was being attacked by a member in his place. Richard Burke went home, it is said, with two thousand guineas in his pocket, which the Catholics had cheerfully paid as the price of getting rid of him. He returned shortly after, but only helped to plunge the business into further confusion, and finally left the scene covered with odium and discredit. His father's *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe* (1792) remains an admirable monument of wise statesmanship, a singular interlude of calm and solid reasoning in the midst of a fiery whirlwind of intense passion. Burke perhaps felt that the state of Ireland was passing away from the sphere of calm and solid reason, when he knew that Dumouriez's victory over the allies at Valmy, which filled Beaconsfield with such gloom and dismay, was celebrated at Dublin by an illumination.

Burke, who was now in his sixty-fourth year, had for

some time announced his intention of leaving the House of Commons, as soon as he had brought to an end the prosecution of Hastings. In 1794 the trial came to a close; the thanks of the House were formally voted to the managers of the impeachment; and when the scene was over, Burke applied for the Chiltern Hundreds. Lord Fitzwilliam nominated Richard Burke for the seat which his father had thus vacated at Malton. Pitt was then making arrangements for the accession of the Portland Whigs to his government, and it was natural, in connexion with these arrangements, to confer some favour on the man who had done more than anybody else to promote the new alliance. It was proposed to make Burke a peer under the style of Lord Beaconsfield—a title in a later age whimsically borrowed for himself by a man of genius, who delighted in irony. To the title it was proposed to attach a yearly income for two or more lives. But the bolt of destiny was at this instant launched. Richard Burke, the adored centre of all his father's hopes and affections, was seized with illness, and died (August, 1794). We cannot look without tragic emotion on the pathos of the scene, which left the remnant of the old man's days desolate and void. A Roman poet has described in touching words the woe of the aged Nestor, as he beheld the funeral pile of his son, too untimely slain—

> "Oro parumper
> Attendas quantum de legibus ipse queratur
> Fatorum et nimio de stamine, quum videt acris
> Antilochi barbam ardentem: quum quærit ab omni
> Quisquis adest socius, cur hæc in tempora duret,
> Quod facinus dignum tam longo admiserit ævo."

Burke's grief finds a nobler expression. "The storm has gone over me, and I lie like one of those old oaks which

the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots and lie prostrate on the earth. . . . I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. . . . I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me have gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity, are in the place of ancestors."

Burke only lived three years after this desolating blow. The arrangements for a peerage, as a matter of course, came to an end. But Pitt was well aware of the serious embarrassments by which Burke was so pressed that he saw actual beggary very close at hand. The King, too—who had once, by the way, granted a pension to Burke's detested Rousseau, though Rousseau was too proud to draw it—seems to have been honourably interested in making a provision for Burke. What Pitt offered was an immediate grant of 1200*l.* a year from the Civil List for Mrs. Burke's life, to be followed by a proposition to Parliament in a message from the King, to confer an annuity of greater value upon a statesman who had served the country to his own loss for thirty years. As a matter of fact, the grant, 2500*l.* a year in amount, much to Burke's chagrin, was never brought before Parliament, but was conferred directly by the Crown, as a charge on a certain stock known as the West India four-and-a-half per cents. It seems as if Pitt were afraid of challenging the opinion of Parliament; and the storm which the pension raised out of doors, was a measure of the trouble which the defence of it would have inflicted on the government inside the House of Commons. According to the rumour of the time, Burke sold two of his pensions upon lives for 27,000*l.*, and there was left the third pension of 1200*l.* for his wife's life. By and by, when the resentment of

the Opposition was roused to the highest pitch by the infamous Treason and Sedition Bills of 1795, the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lauderdale, seeking to accumulate every possible complaint against the government, assailed the grant to Burke, as made without the consent of Parliament, and as a violent contradiction to the whole policy of the plan for economic reform. The attack, if not unjustifiable in itself, came from an unlucky quarter. A chief of the house of Bedford was the most unfit person in the world to protest against grants by favour of the Crown. Burke was too practised a rhetorician not to see the opening, and his *Letter to a Noble Lord* is the most splendid repartee in the English language.

It is not surprising that Burke's defence should have provoked rejoinder. A cloud of pamphlets followed the *Letter to a Noble Lord*—some in doggrel verse, others in a magniloquent prose imitated from his own, others mere poisonous scurrility. The nearest approach to a just stroke that I can find, after turning over a pile of this trash, is an expression of wonder that he, who was inconsolable for the loss of a beloved son, should not have reflected how many tender parents had been made childless in the profusion of blood, of which he himself had been the most relentless champion. Our disgust at the pages of insult which were here levelled at a great man is perhaps moderated by the thought that Burke himself, who of all people ought to have known better, had held up to public scorn and obloquy men of such virtue, attainments, and real service to mankind as Richard Price and Joseph Priestley.

It was during these months that he composed the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, though the third and fourth of them were not published until after his death. There have been those to whom these compositions appeared to

be Burke's masterpieces. In fact they are deplorable. They contain passages of fine philosophy and of skilful and plausible reasoning, but such passages only make us wonder how they come to be where they are. The reader is in no humour for them. In splendour of rhetoric, in fine images, in sustention, in irony, they surpass anything that Burke ever wrote; but of the qualities and principles that, far more than his rhetoric, have made Burke so admirable and so great—of justice, of firm grasp of fact, of a reasonable sense of the probabilities of things—there are only traces enough to light up the gulfs of empty words, reckless phrases, and senseless vituperations, that surge and boil around them.

It is with the same emotion of "grief and shame" with which Fox heard Burke argue against relief to Dissenters, that we hear him abusing the courts of law because they did not convict Hardy and Horne Tooke. The pages against divorce and civil marriage, even granting that they point to the right judgment in these matters, express it with a vehemence that is irrational, and in the dialect, not of a statesman, but of an enraged Capucin. The highly-wrought passage in which Burke describes external aggrandisement as the original thought and the ultimate aim of the earlier statesmen of the Revolution, is no better than ingenious nonsense. The whole performance rests on a gross and inexcusable anachronism. There is a contemptuous refusal to discriminate between groups of men who were as different from one another as Oliver Cromwell was different from James Nayler, and between periods which were as unlike in all their conditions as the Athens of the Thirty Tyrants was unlike Athens after Thrasybulus had driven the Tyrants out. He assumes that the men, the policy, the maxims of the French government are the men,

the policy, and the maxims of the handful of obscure miscreants who had hacked priests and nobles to pieces at the doors of the prisons four years before. Carnot is to him merely "that sanguinary tyrant," and the heroic Hoche becomes "that old practised assassin," while the Prince of Wales, by the way, and the Duke of York are the hope and pride of nations. To heap up that incessant iteration about thieves, murderers, housebreakers, assassins, bandits, bravoes with their hands dripping with blood and their maw gorged with property, desperate paramours, bombastical players, the refuse and rejected offal of strolling theatres, bloody buffoons, bloody felons—all this was as unjust to hundreds of disinterested, honest, and patriotic men who were then earnestly striving to restore a true order and solid citizenship in France, as the foul-mouthed scurrility of an Irish Orangeman is unjust to millions of devout Catholics.

Burke was the man who might have been expected before all others to know that in every system of government, whatever may have been the crimes of its origin, there is sure, by the bare necessity of things, to rise up a party or an individual, whom their political instinct will force into resistance to the fatalities of anarchy. Man is too strongly a political animal for it to be otherwise. It was so at each period and division in the Revolution. There was always a party of order; and by 1796, when Burke penned these reckless philippics, order was only too easy in France. The Revolution had worn out the passion and moral enthusiasm of its first years, and all the best men of the revolutionary time had been consumed in a flame of fire. When Burke talked about this war being wholly unlike any war that ever was waged in Europe before, about its being a war for justice on the one side, and a fanatical

bloody propagandism on the other, he shut his eyes to the plain fact that the Directory had after all really sunk to the moral level of Frederick and Catharine, or, for that matter, of Louis the Fourteenth himself. This war was only too like the other great wars of European history. The French government had become political, exactly in the same sense in which Thugut and Metternich and Herzberg were political. The French Republic in 1797 was neither more nor less aggressive, immoral, piratical, than the monarchies which had partitioned Poland, and had intended to redistribute the continent of Europe to suit their own ambitions. The Coalition began the game, but France proved too strong for them, and they had the worst of their game. Jacobinism may have inspired the original fire which made her armies irresistible, but Jacobinism of that stamp had now gone out of fashion, and to denounce a peace with the Directory because the origin of their government was regicidal, was as childish as it would have been in Mazarin to decline a treaty of regicide peace with Oliver Cromwell.

What makes the *Regicide Peace* so repulsive is not that it recommends energetic prosecution of the war, and not that it abounds in glaring fallacies in detail, but that it is in direct contradiction with that strong, positive, rational, and sane method which had before uniformly marked Burke's political philosophy. Here lay his inconsistency, not in abandoning democratic principles, for he had never held them, but in forgetting his own rules, that nations act from adequate motives relative to their interests, and not from metaphysical speculation; that we cannot draw an indictment against a whole people, that there is a species of hostile justice which no asperity of war wholly extinguishes in the minds of a civilized people. "Steady independent minds" he had once said, "when they have an

object of so serious a concern to mankind as *government* under their contemplation, will disdain to assume the part of satirists and declaimers." Show the thing that you ask for, he cried during the American war, to be reason, show it to be common-sense. We have a measure of the reason and common-sense of Burke's attitude in the *Regicide Peace*, in the language which it inspired in Windham and others, who denounce Wilberforce for canting when he spoke of peace; who stigmatized Pitt as weak, and a pander to national avarice for thinking of the cost of the war; and who actually charged the liverymen of London who petitioned for peace, with open sedition.

It is a striking illustration of the versatility of Burke's moods, that immediately before sitting down to write the flaming *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, he had composed one of the most lucid and accurately meditated of all his tracts, which, short as it is, contains ideas on free trade which was only too far in advance of the opinion of his time. In 1772 a Corn Bill had been introduced—it was passed in the following year—of which Adam Smith said, that it was like the laws of Solon, not the best in itself, but the best which the situation and tendency of the times would admit. In speaking upon this measure, Burke had laid down those sensible principles on the trade in corn, which he now in 1795 worked out in the *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*. Those who do not concern themselves with economics will perhaps be interested in the singular passage, vigorously objected to by Dugald Stewart, in which Burke sets up a genial defence of the consumption of ardent spirits. It is interesting as an argument, and it is most characteristic of the author.

The curtain was now falling. All who saw him, felt that Burke's life was quickly drawing to a close. His

son's death had struck the final blow. We could only wish that the years had brought to him, what it ought to be the fervent prayer of us all to find at the close of the long struggle with ourselves and with circumstance—a disposition to happiness, a composed spirit to which time has made things clear, an unrebellious temper, and hopes undimmed for mankind. If this was not so, Burke at least busied himself to the end in great interests. His charity to the unfortunate emigrants from France was diligent and unwearied. Among other solid services, he established a school at Beaconsfield for sixty French boys, principally the orphans of Quiberon, and the children of other emigrants who had suffered in the cause. Almost the last glimpse that we have of Burke is in a record of a visit to Beaconsfield by the author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. Mackintosh had written to Burke to express his admiration for his character and genius, and recanting his old defence of the Revolution. "Since that time," he said, "a melancholy experience has undeceived me on many subjects, in which I was then the dupe of my enthusiasm." When Mackintosh went to Beaconsfield (Christmas, 1797), he was as much amazed as every one else with the exuberance of his host's mind in conversation. Even then Burke entered with cordial glee into the sports of children, rolling about with them on the carpet, and pouring out in his gambols the sublimest images, mixed with the most wretched puns. He said of Fox, with a deep sigh, "He is made to be loved." There was the irresistible outbreak against "that putrid carcase, that mother of all evil—the French Revolution." It reminded him of the accursed things that crawled in and out of the mouth of the vile hag in Spenser's Cave of Error; and he repeated the nauseous stanza. Mackintosh was to be the faithful knight

of the romance, the brightness of whose sword was to flash destruction on the filthy progeny.

It was on the 9th of July, 1797, that in the sixty-eighth year of his age, preserving his faculties to the last moment, he expired. With magnanimous tenderness, Fox proposed that he should be buried among the great dead in Westminster Abbey; but Burke had left strict injunctions that his funeral should be private, and he was laid in the little church at Beaconsfield. It was a terrible moment in the history of England and of Europe. An open mutiny had just been quelled in the fleet. There had been signs of disaffection in the army. In Ireland the spirit of revolt was smouldering, which in a few months broke out in the fierce flames of a great rebellion. And it was the year of the political crime of Campo Formio, that sinister pacification in which violence and fraud once more asserted their unveiled ascendancy in Europe. These sombre shadows were falling over the western world, when a life went out, which, notwithstanding some grave aberrations, had made great tides in human destiny very luminous.

CHAPTER X.

BURKE'S LITERARY CHARACTER.

A STORY is told that in the time when Burke was still at peace with the Dissenters, he visited Priestley, and after seeing his library and his laboratory, and hearing how his host's hours were given to experiment and meditation, he exclaimed that such a life must make him the happiest and most to be envied of men. It must sometimes have occurred to Burke to wonder whether he had made the right choice when he locked away the fragments of his history, and plunged into the torment of party and Parliament. But his interests and aptitudes were too strong and overmastering for him to have been right in doing otherwise. Contact with affairs was an indispensable condition for the full use of his great faculties, in spite of their being less faculties of affairs than of speculation. Public life was the actual field in which to test, and work out, and use with good effect the moral ideas which were Burke's most sincere and genuine interests. And he was able to bring these moral ideas into such effective use because he was so entirely unfettered by the narrowing spirit of formula. No man, for instance, who thought in formulæ would have written the curious passage that I have already referred to, in which he eulogises gin, because "under the pressure of the cares and sorrows of our mortal condition, men have at all times and in all countries

called in some physical aid to their moral consolation." He valued words at their proper rate; that is to say, he knew that some of the greatest facts in the life and character of man, and in the institutions of society, can find no description and no measurement in words. Public life, as we can easily perceive, with its shibboleths, its exclusive parties, its measurement by conventional standards, its attention to small expediencies before the larger ones, is not a field where such characteristics are likely to make an instant effect.

Though it is not wrong to say of Burke that, as an orator, he was transcendent, yet in that immediate influence upon his hearers which is commonly supposed to be the mark of oratorical success, all the evidence is that Burke generally failed. We have seen how his speech against Hastings affected Miss Burney, and how the speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts was judged by Pitt not to be worth answering. Perhaps the greatest that he ever made was that on conciliation with America; the wisest in its temper, the most closely logical in its reasoning, the amplest in appropriate topics, the most generous and conciliatory in the substance of its appeals. Yet Erskine, who was in the House when this was delivered, said that it drove everybody away, including people who, when they came to read it, read it over and over again, and could hardly think of anything else. As Moore says rather too floridly, but with truth—"In vain did Burke's genius put forth its superb plumage, glittering all over with the hundred eyes of fancy—the gait of the bird was heavy and awkward, and its voice seemed rather to scare than attract." Burke's gestures were clumsy; he had sonorous but harsh tones; he never lost a strong Irish accent; and his utterance was often hurried and eager. Apart from these dis-

advantages of accident which have been overcome by men infinitely inferior to Burke, it is easy to perceive, from the matter and texture of the speeches that have become English classics, that the very qualities which are excellences in literature were drawbacks to the spoken discourses. A listener in Westminster Hall or the House of Commons, unlike the reader by his fireside in the next century, is always thinking of arguments and facts that bear directly on the special issue before him. What he wishes to hear is some particularity of event or inference which will either help him to make up his mind, or will justify him if his mind is already made up. Burke never neglected these particularities, and he never went so wide as to fall for an instant into vagueness, but he went wide enough into the generalities that lent force and light to his view, to weary men who cared for nothing, and could not be expected to care for anything, but the business actually in hand and the most expeditious way through it. The contentiousness is not close enough and rapid enough to hold the interest of a practical assembly, which, though it was a hundred times less busy than the House of Commons to-day, seems to have been eager in the inverse proportion of what it had to do, to get that little quickly done.

Then we may doubt whether there is any instance of an orator throwing his spell over a large audience, without frequent resort to the higher forms of commonplace. Two of the greatest speeches of Burke's time are supposed to have been Grattan's on Tithes and Fox's on the Westminster Scrutiny, and these were evidently full of the splendid commonplaces of the first-rate rhetorician. Burke's mind was not readily set to these tunes. The emotion to which he commonly appealed was that too rare one, the love of wisdom; and he combined his thoughts and knowledge in

propositions of wisdom so weighty and strong, that the minds of ordinary hearers were not on the instant prepared for them.

It is true that Burke's speeches were not without effect of an indirect kind, for there is good evidence that at the time when Lord North's ministry was tottering, Burke had risen to a position of the first eminence in Parliament. When Boswell said to him that people would wonder how he could bring himself to take so much pains with his speeches, knowing with certainty that not one vote would be gained by them, Burke answered that it is very well worth while to take pains to speak well in Parliament; for if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion; and though an Act that has been ably opposed becomes law, yet in its progress it is softened and modified to meet objections whose force has never been acknowledged directly. "Aye, sir," Johnson broke in, "and there is a gratification of pride. Though we cannot out-vote them, we will out-argue them."

Out-arguing is not perhaps the right word for most of Burke's performances. He is at heart thinking more of the subject itself than of those on whom it was his apparent business to impress a particular view of it. He surrenders himself wholly to the matter, and follows up, though with a strong and close tread, all the excursions to which it may give rise in an elastic intelligence—"motion," as De Quincey says, "propagating motion, and life throwing off life." But then this exuberant way of thinking, this willingness to let the subject lead, is less apt in public discourse than it is in literature, and from this comes the literary quality of Burke's speeches.

With all his hatred for the book-man in politics, Burke

owed much of his own distinction to that generous richness and breadth of judgment which had been ripened in him by literature and his practice in it. Like some other men in our history, he showed that books are a better preparation for statesmanship than early training in the subordinate posts and among the permanent officials of a public department. There is no copiousness of literary reference in his works, such as over-abounded in civil and ecclesiastical publicists of the seventeenth century. Nor can we truly say that there is much, though there is certainly some, of that tact which literature is alleged to confer on those who approach it in a just spirit and with the true gift. The influence of literature on Burke lay partly in the direction of emancipation from the mechanical formulæ of practical politics; partly in the association which it engendered, in a powerful understanding like his, between politics and the moral forces of the world, and between political maxims and the old and great sentences of morals; partly in drawing him, even when resting his case on prudence and expediency, to appeal to the widest and highest sympathies; partly, and more than all, in opening his thoughts to the many conditions, possibilities, and "varieties of untried being" in human character and situation, and so giving an incomparable flexibility to his methods of political approach.

This flexibility is not to be found in his manner and composition. That derives its immense power from other sources; from passion, intensity, imagination, size, truth, cogency of logical reason. If any one has imbued himself with that exacting love of delicacy, measure, and taste in expression, which was until our own day a sacred tradition of the French, then he will not like Burke. Those who insist on charm, on winningness in style, on subtle harmonies

and exquisite suggestion, are disappointed in Burke; they even find him stiff and over-coloured. And there are blemishes of this kind. His banter is nearly always ungainly, his wit blunt, as Johnson said of it, and very often unseasonable. We feel that Johnson must have been right in declaring that though Burke was always in search of pleasantries, he never made a good joke in his life. As is usual with a man who has not true humour, Burke is also without true pathos. The thought of wrong or misery moved him less to pity for the victim than to anger against the cause. Again, there are some gratuitous and unredeemed vulgarities; some images whose barbarity makes us shudder, of creeping ascarides and inexpugnable tapeworms. But it is the mere foppery of literature to suffer ourselves to be long detained by specks like these.

The varieties of Burke's literary or rhetorical method are very striking. It is almost incredible that the superb imaginative amplification of the description of Hyder Ali's descent upon the Carnatic should be from the same pen as the grave, simple, unadorned *Address to the King* (1777), where each sentence falls on the ear with the accent of some golden-tongued oracle of the wise gods. His stride is the stride of a giant, from the sentimental beauty of the picture of Marie Antoinette at Versailles, or the red horror of the tale of Debi Sing in Rungpore, to the learning, positiveness, and cool judicial mastery of the *Report on the Lords' Journals* (1794), which Philip Francis, no mean judge, declared on the whole to be the "most eminent and extraordinary" of all his productions. Even in the coolest and dryest of his pieces there is the mark of greatness, of grasp, of comprehension. In all its varieties Burke's style is noble, earnest, deep-flowing, because his sentiment was lofty and fervid, and went with sincerity and ardent

disciplined travail of judgment. Fox told Francis Horner that Dryden's prose was Burke's great favourite, and that Burke imitated him more than anyone else. We may well believe that he was attracted by Dryden's ease, his copiousness, his gaiety, his manliness of style, but there can hardly have been any conscious attempt at imitation. Their topics were too different. Burke had the style of his subjects, the amplitude, the weightiness, the laboriousness, the sense, the high flight, the grandeur, proper to a man dealing with imperial themes, the freedom of nations, the justice of rulers, the fortunes of great societies, the sacredness of law. Burke will always be read with delight and edification, because in the midst of discussions on the local and the accidental, he scatters apophthegms that take us into the regions of lasting wisdom. In the midst of the torrent of his most strenuous and passionate deliverances, he suddenly rises aloof from his immediate subject, and in all tranquillity reminds us of some permanent relation of things, some enduring truth of human life or society. We do not hear the organ tones of Milton, for faith and freedom had other notes in the seventeenth century. There is none of the complacent and wise-browed sagacity of Bacon, for Burke's were days of eager personal strife and party fire and civil division. We are not exhilarated by the cheerfulness, the polish, the fine manners of Bolingbroke, for Burke had an anxious conscience, and was earnest and intent that the good should triumph. And yet Burke is among the greatest of those who have wrought marvels in the prose of our English tongue.

The influence of Burke on the publicists of the generation after the Revolution was much less considerable than might have been expected. In Germany, where there has been so much excellent writing about *Staatswissenschaft*,

with such poverty and darkness in the wisdom of practical politics, there is a long list of writers who have drawn their inspiration from Burke. In France, publicists of the sentimental school, like Chateaubriand, and the politico-ecclesiastical school, like De Maistre, fashioned a track of their own. In England Burke made a deep mark on contemporary opinion during the last years of his life, and then his influence underwent a certain eclipse. The official Whigs considered him a renegade and a heresiarch, who had committed the deadly sin of breaking up the party, and they never mentioned his name without bitterness. To men like Godwin, the author of *Political Justice*, Burke was as antichrist. Bentham and James Mill thought of him as a declaimer who lived upon applause, and who, as one of them says, was for protecting everything old, not because it was good but because it existed. In one quarter only did he exert a profound influence. His maxim that men might employ their sagacity in discovering the latent wisdom which underlies general prejudices and old institutions, instead of exploding them, inspired Coleridge, as I have already said; and the Coleridgian school are Burke's direct descendants, whenever they deal with the significance and the relations of Church and State. But they connected these views so closely with their views in metaphysics and theology, that the association with Burke was effectually disguised.

The only English writer of that age whom we can name along with Burke in the literature of enduring power, is Wordsworth, that great representative in another and a higher field, and with many rare elements added that were all his own, of those harmonizing and conciliatory forces and ideas that make man's destiny easier to him through piety in its oldest and best sense; through reverence for

the past, for duty, for institutions. He was born in the year of the *Present Discontents* (1770); and when Burke wrote the *Reflections*, Wordsworth was standing, with France "on the top of golden hours," listening with delight among the ruins of the Bastille, or on the banks of the Loire, to "the homeless sound of joy that was in the sky." When France lost faith and freedom, and Napoleon had built his throne on their grave, he began to see those strong elements which for Burke had all his life been the true and fast foundation of the social world. Wide as is the difference between an oratorical and a declamatory mind like Burke's, and the least oratorical of all poets, yet, under this difference of form and temper, there is a striking likeness in spirit. There was the same energetic feeling about moral ideas, the same frame of counsel and prudence, the same love for the slowness of time, the same slight account held of mere intellectual knowledge, and even the same ruling sympathy with that side of the character of Englishmen which Burke exulted in, as "*their awe of kings and reverence for priests*," "*their sullen resistance of innovation*," "*their unalterable perseverance in the wisdom of prejudice*."

The conservative movement in England ran on for many years in the ecclesiastical channel, rather than among questions where Burke's writings might have been brought to bear. On the political side the most active minds, both in practice and theory, worked out the principles of liberalism, and they did so on a plan and by methods from which Burke's utilitarian liberalism and his historic conservatism were equally remote. There are many signs around us that this epoch is for the moment at an end. The historic method, fitting in with certain dominant conceptions in the region of natural science, is bringing men

round to a way of looking at society for which Burke's maxims are exactly suited; and it seems probable that he will be more frequently and more seriously referred to within the next twenty years than he has been within the whole of the last eighty.

THE END.

English Men of Letters

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

MACAULAY

BY

J. COTTER MORISON

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Sketch of Macaulay's Life up to the Fall of the Melbourne Government 1

CHAPTER II.

Characteristics 38

CHAPTER III.

The "Essays" 66

CHAPTER IV.

Narrative of Macaulay's Life Resumed up to the Appearance of the "History" 106

CHAPTER V.

The "History" 136

CHAPTER VI.

The End 171

MACAULAY.

CHAPTER I.

SKETCH OF MACAULAY'S LIFE UP TO THE FALL OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF LORD MELBOURNE.

[1800–1841.]

THE prosperity which attended Macaulay all through life may be said to have begun with the moment of his birth. Of all good gifts which it is in the power of fortune to bestow, none can surpass the being born of wise, honourable, and tender parents: and this lot fell to him. He came of a good stock, though not of the kind most recognized by Colleges of Arms. Descended from Scotch Presbyterians—ministers many of them—on his father's side, and from a Quaker family on his mother's, he probably united as many guarantees of "good birth," in the moral sense of the words, as could be found in these islands at the beginning of the century. His mother (*née* Selina Mills) appears to have been a woman of warm-hearted and affectionate temper, yet clear-headed and firm withal, and with a good eye for the influences which go to the formation of character. Though full of a young mother's natural pride at the talent and mental precocity

of her eldest son, the subject of this volume, Thomas Babington Macaulay (born October 25, 1800), she was wise enough to eschew even the semblance of spoiling. The boy found, like many studious children, that he could spend his time with more pleasure, and probably with more profit, in reading at home than in lessons at school, and consequently exerted daily that passive resistance against leaving home which many mothers have not the strength to overcome. Mrs. Macaulay always met appeals grounded on the unfavourableness of the weather with the stoical answer: "No, Tom; if it rains cats and dogs you shall go." As a mere infant, his knowledge, and his power of working it up into literary form, were equally extraordinary. Compositions in prose and verse, histories, epics, odes, and hymns flowed with equal freedom, and correctness in point of language, from his facile pen. He was regarded, as he well deserved to be, as a prodigy, not only by his parents, but by others who might be presumed to be less partial critics. Mrs. Hannah More, who in certain circles almost assumed the character of a female Dr. Johnson, and director of taste, pronounced little Macaulay's hymns "quite extraordinary for such a baby." The wise mother treasured these things in her heart, but carefully shielded her child from the corrupting influences of early flattery. "You will believe," she writes, "that we never appear to regard anything he does as anything more than a school-boy's amusement." Genuine maternal tenderness, without a trace of weak indulgence, seems to have marked this excellent woman's treatment of her children. When once he fell ill at school, she came and nursed him with such affection that years afterwards he referred to the circumstance with vivid emotion:

"There is nothing I remember with so much pleasure as the time when you nursed me at Aspenden. How sick and sleepless and weak I was, lying in bed, when I was told that you were come! How well I remember with what an ecstasy of joy I saw that face approaching me! The sound of your voice, the touch of your hand, are present to me now, and will be, I trust in God, to my last hour."

But many a devoted mother could watch by the sick-bed of her son for weeks without sleep, who would not have the courage to keep him up to a high standard of literary performance. When he was not yet thirteen she wrote to him:

"I know you write with great ease to yourself, and would rather write ten poems than prune one. All your pieces are much mended after a little reflection; therefore, take your solitary walks and think over each separate thing. Spare no time or trouble, and render each piece as perfect as you can, and then leave the event without one anxious thought. I have always admired a saying of one of the old heathen philosophers; when a friend was condoling with him that he so well deserved of the gods, and yet they did not shower their favours on him as on some others less worthy, he answered, 'I will continue to deserve well of them.' So do you, my dearest."

Deep, sober, clear-eyed love watched over Macaulay's childhood. His mother lived long enough to see her son on the high-road to honour and fame, and died almost immediately after he had made his first great speech on the Reform Bill in 1831.

His father, Zachary, was a man cast in an heroic mould, who reproduced, one might surmise, the moral features of some stern old Scotch Covenanter among his ancestors, and never quite fitted into the age in which it was his lot to live. There was a latent faculty in him which, in spite of his long and laborious life, he was never able completely to unfold. A silent, austere, earnest, patient, en-

during man, almost wholly without the gift of speech, and the power of uttering the deep, involved thought that was in him—a man after Carlyle's own heart, if he could have seen anything good in an emancipator of negroes. A feeling of respect bordering on reverence is excited by the little we know of Macaulay's father—his piety, his zeal, his self-sacrifice to the cause to which he devoted his mind, body, and estate; even the gloom and moroseness of his latter years, all point to a character of finer fibre and loftier strain, many might be disposed to think, than that of his eloquent and brilliant son. There are parallel cases on record of men endowed with over-abundance of thought and feeling, for which they never find adequate expression, who have had sons in whose case the spell which sealed their own lips to silence is broken—sons who can find ready utterance for the burden of thought which lay imprisoned in their sires, partly because they were not *overfull*, as their fathers were. Diderot was such a case. He always said that he was not to be compared to his father, the cutler of Langres; and declared he was never so pleased in his life as when a fellow-townsman said to him, "Ah, M. Diderot, you are a very famous man, but you will never be half the man your father was." Carlyle always spoke of his father in similar language. But the closest analogy to the two Macaulays is that of the two Mirabeaus, the crabbed, old "friend of man," and the erratic genius, the orator Gabrielle Honoré. It is certainly "a likeness in unlikeness" of no common kind; and nothing can be more dissimilar than the two pairs of men; but the similarity of relation of elder to younger in the two cases is all the more remarkable.

In this grave, well-ordered home Macaulay passed a happy childhood. He had three brothers and five sisters,

all his juniors, and for them he always felt a fraternal affection which bordered on a passion. His trials, as already implied, commenced when he had to leave his books, his parents, and his playmates for a distant school in the neighbourhood of Cambridge. Time never seems to have completely assuaged his home-sickness; and his letters to his mother express, in a style of precocious maturity, the artless yearnings and affectionate grief of a child. Nothing more dutiful, tender, and intelligent can well be conceived. His second half-year seems to have been even more painful to bear than the first; his biographer will not print the letter he wrote immediately after his return to school at the end of the summer holidays—it would be "too cruel." This is the second—written two months before he had ended his thirteenth year:

"*Shelford, August* 14, 1813.

"My dear Mamma,—I must confess that I have been a little disappointed at not receiving a letter from home to-day. I hope, however, for one to-morrow. My spirits are far more depressed by leaving home than they were last half-year. Everything brings home to my recollection. Everything I read, or see, or hear brings it to my mind. You told me I should be happy when I once came here, but not an hour passes in which I do not shed tears at thinking of home. Every hope, however unlikely to be realized, affords me some small consolation. The morning on which I went, you told me that possibly I might come home before the holidays. If you can confirm that hope, believe me when I assure you there is nothing which I would not give for one instant's sight of home. Tell me in your next, expressly, if you can, whether or no there is any likelihood of my coming home before the holidays. If I could gain papa's leave, I should select my birthday, October 25, as the time which I should wish to spend at that home which absence renders still dearer to me. I think I see you sitting by papa just after his dinner, reading my letter, and turning to him with an inquisitive glance at the end of the paragraph. I think, too, that I see his expressive shake of

the head at it. Oh may I be mistaken! You cannot conceive what an alteration a favorable answer would produce on me. If your approbation of my request depends upon my advancing in study, I will work like a cart-horse. If you should refuse it, you will deprive me of the most pleasing illusion which I ever experienced in my life. Pray do not fail to write speedily.—Your dutiful and affectionate son, T. B. MACAULAY."

The urgent and pathetic appeal was not successful. The stern father did shake his head as the boy had feared, and the "pleasing illusion" was not realized.

His school, though a private one, was of a superior kind. There he laid the foundation of his future scholarship. But what surprises most is, that in the midst of the usually engrossing occupation of a diligent school-boy, with his Latin, Greek, and mathematics, he found time to gratify that insatiable thirst for European literature which he retained through life. Before he was fifteen we find him recommending his mother to read Boccaccio, at least in Dryden's metrical version, and weighing him against Chaucer, to whom he "infinitely prefers him." This shows, at any rate, that no Puritanic surveillance directed his choice of books. The fault seems to have been rather the other way, and he enjoyed an excess of liberty, in being allowed to indulge almost without restraint his strong partiality for the lighter and more attractive forms of literature, to the neglect of austerer studies. Poetry and prose fiction remained through life Macaulay's favorite reading. And there is no evidence that he at any time was ever submitted, by his teachers or himself, to a mental discipline of a more bracing kind. His father apparently considered that the formation of his son's mind was no part of his duty. Engrossed in his crusade against slavery, in which cause "he laboured as men labour for the

honours of a profession, or for the subsistence of their children," he left the mental training of young Macaulay to hired teachers—except in one particular, which will be readily divined. The principles of evangelical religion were inculcated with more zeal and persistence than discretion. It is the ever-recurring error of old and serious minds, to think that the loftier views of life and duty, the moral beliefs which they themselves, in the course of years, after a long experience, perhaps of a very different code of ethics, have acquired, can be transplanted by precept, full-grown and vigorous, into the minds of the young. The man of fifty, forgetting his own youth, or remembering it only with horror, wishes his son to think and feel and act as he does himself. He should wish him the languid pulse and failing vigour of decay at the same time. In any case, the attempt to impart "vital religion" to Macaulay signally failed, and possibly was the indirect cause of the markedly unspiritual tone of his writings, and of his resolute silence on questions of ultimate beliefs. The son's taste for poetry, novels, and "worldly literature" produced a suspicious querulousness in the elder Macaulay, which cannot easily be excused. He listened with a too indulgent ear to vague complaints against his son's carriage and conversation, demanding answers to the anonymous accusations, in a tone little calculated to inspire sympathy. It says very much for Macaulay's sweetness of character, that he was never soured or estranged from his father by this injudicious treatment. On the contrary, he remained a loyal and dutiful son, under trials, as we shall see, of no common severity.

In October, 1818, he went as a commoner to Trinity College, Cambridge. Neither his taste nor his acquirements were fitted to win him distinction in the special

studies of the place. In his boyhood he had shown a transient liking for mathematics; but this had given way to an intense repugnance for exact science. "I can scarcely bear," he says in a letter to his mother, "to write on mathematics, or mathematicians. Oh for words to express my abomination of that science, if a name sacred to the useful and embellishing arts may be applied to the perception and recollection of certain properties in numbers and figures! Oh that I had to learn astrology, demonology, or school divinity! . . . Oh to change Cam for Isis!" His inclination was wholly for literature. Unfortunately, according to the regulations then in force, a minimum of honours in mathematics was an indispensable condition for competing for the Chancellor's medals—the test of classical proficiency before the institution of the classical tripos. Macaulay failed even to obtain the lowest place among the Junior Optimes, and was, what is called in University parlance, "gulphed." But he won the prize for Latin declamation, he twice gained the Chancellor's medals for English verse, and by winning a Craven scholarship he sufficiently proved his classical attainments. Why he was not sent to Oxford, as it seems he would have preferred, does not appear. Probably religious scruples on his father's part had something to do with the choice of a University. Otherwise, Oxford would have appeared to offer obvious advantages to a young man with his bent. His disproportionate partiality for the lighter sides of literature met with no corrective at Cambridge. As he could not assimilate the mathematical training, he practically got very little. The poets, orators, and historians, read with a view chiefly to their language, formed a very imperfect discipline for a mind in which fancy and imagination rather needed the curb than the spur. A course

of what at Oxford is technically called "science," even as then understood, would have been an invaluable gymnastic for Macaulay, and would have strengthened faculties in his mind, which as a matter of fact never received adequate culture. We shall have repeated occasion in subsequent chapters to notice his want of philosophic grasp, his dread and dislike of arduous speculation, his deficient courage in facing intellectual problems. It is not probable that any education would have made him a deep and vigorous thinker; but we can hardly doubt that a more austere training would at least have preserved him from some of the errors into which he habitually fell.

As it was, not Cambridge studies but Cambridge society left a mark on his mind. Genial and frank, and with an unlimited passion and talent for talk, he made troops of friends, and before he left the University had acquired a reputation as one of the best conversationists of the day. He met his equals in the Coleridges, Hyde and Charles Villiers, Romilly, Praed, and in one case his superior in verbal dialectics, Charles Austin, of whom Mill in one sentence has drawn such a powerful sketch: "The impression which he gave was that of boundless strength, together with talents which, combined with such apparent force of will and character, seemed capable of dominating the world." Of their wit combats a story is told, which slightly savours of mythus, how at Bowood the two Cantabs got engaged in a discussion at breakfast, and such was the splendour and copiousness of their talk that the whole company in the house, "ladies, artists, politicians, diners-out," listened entranced till it was time to dress for dinner. It is needless to say that Macaulay shone among the brightest in the Union Debating Society. Thus those faculties which were naturally strong were made stronger,

those which were naturally weak received little or no exercise.

After literature, Macaulay's strongest taste was for politics. His father's house at Clapham was a common meeting-ground for politicians engaged in the agitation against slavery; and when yet a boy he had learned to take an interest in public affairs. In the free atmosphere of undergraduate discussion, such an interest is the last which is allowed to lie dormant, and Macaulay soon became a strenuous politician. Then occurred his single change of opinions throughout life. He went up to Cambridge a Tory; Charles Austin soon made him a Whig, or something more; and before his first year of residence at Cambridge was over, he had to defend himself against the exaggerated reports of some tale-bearer who had alarmed his parents. He protests that he is not a "son of anarchy and confusion," as his mother had been led to believe. The particular charge seems to have been that he had been "initiated into democratical societies" in the University, and that he had spoken of the so-called Manchester massacre in terms of strong indignation. It would have said little for his generosity and public spirit if he had not.

It is not easy for us now to realize the condition of England in Macaulay's youth. Though so little remote in point of time, and though still remembered by old men who are yet among us, the state of public affairs between the peace of 1815 and the passing of the Reform Bill was so unlike anything to which we are accustomed, that a certain effort is required to make it present to the mind. It is not easy to conceive a state of things in which the country was covered by an army of "common informers," whose business it was to denounce the non-payment of

taxes, and share with the fisc the onerous fines imposed, often without a shadow of justice—in which marauders roamed at night under the command of "General Ludd," and terrorized whole counties—when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and "in Suffolk, nightly, fires of incendiaries began to blaze in every district"—when mobs of labourers assembled with flags bearing the motto "Bread or Blood," and riots occurred in London, Nottingham, Leicester, and Derby, culminating in the massacre at Manchester—when at last the famous Six Acts were passed, which surrendered the liberties of Englishmen into the hands of the Government. "The old spirit of liberty would appear to have departed from England, when public meetings could not be held without the licence of magistrates, when private houses might be searched for arms, when a person convicted a second time of publishing a libel"[1]—that is, a criticism on the Government—"might be transported beyond the seas." Macaulay had been a year at College when the Six Acts were passed (December, 1819).

Nothing could be more characteristic than the way in which Macaulay kept his head in this semi-revolutionary condition of public affairs. A man of strong passions would, inevitably, have taken an extreme side—either for reaction or reform. Civil society seemed threatened by the anarchists; civil liberty seemed equally threatened by the Government. Either extreme Tory or extreme Radical opinions would appear to have been the only choice for an ardent young spirit—and the latter the more suitable to the impetuosity of youth and genius. Macaulay took his stand, with the premature prudence and wisdom of a veteran, on the judicious compromise of sound Whig

[1] Knight's *History of England*, vol. viii. cap. 4.

principles. He was zealous for reform, but never was touched by a breath of revolutionary fervour. The grinding collision of old and new principles of government did not set him on fire either with fear or with hope. The menacing invasions on the old system of Church and State, which had wrecked the happiness of the last years of Burke—which now disturbed the rest of such men as Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth—filled him with no dismay. But he was as little caught up by visions of a new dawn—of a future "all the brighter that the past was base." In the heyday of youth and spirits and talent, he took his side with the old and practical Whigs, who were well on their guard against "too much zeal," but who saw their way to such reforms as could be realized in the conditions of the time. He was a Whig by necessity of nature, by calmness of passion, combined with superlative common-sense.

He did not get a Fellowship till his third and last trial, in 1824. He had then already begun to make a name in literature. As a Junior Bachelor he competed for the Greaves historical prize—"On the Conduct and Character of William the Third." The essay is still in existence, though only the briefest fragments of it have been published, which are interesting on more grounds than one. Not only is the subject the same as that which occupied so many years of his later life, but the style is already his famous style in all essential features. There is no mistaking this:

"Lewis XIV. was not a great general. He was not a great legislator. But he was in one sense of the word a great king. He was perfect master of all the mysteries of the science of royalty—of the arts which at once extend power and conciliate popularity, which most advantageously display the merits and most dexterously conceal the deficiencies of a sovereign."

This essay shows that his style was quite natural, and unaffected. Whatever may be thought of Macaulay's style by the present race of critics, no one will deny that it was original, and has left a mark on our literature; like all original styles, which give an impression of novelty on their first appearance, it was, we see, his spontaneous mode of utterance. The true prose writer, equally with the true poet, is born, not made.

More important were his contributions to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine.* Spirited verse, prose, fiction, and criticism on poets, were his first efforts in literature, and prove sufficiently, if proof were wanted, in what direction his calling lay. Two battle-pieces in metre, *Ivry* and *Naseby*, still live, by reason of their vigour and animation, and are little, if at all, inferior to his later productions in verse. The *Fragments of a Roman Tale*, and the *Scenes from the Athenian Revels*, are so sparkling and vivacious, and show such a natural turn for a dialogue and dramatic *mise en scène*, that it says a great deal for Macaulay's good-sense and literary conscientiousness that he remained content with this first success, and did not continue to work a vein which would have brought him prompt, if ephemeral, popularity. There can be little doubt that he could have equalled, or surpassed, most historical novelists who have written since Scott. But he had too genuine a love of history not to be conscious of the essential hollowness and unreality of the historical novel, and he never meddled with it again. Of the two criticisms on Dante and Petrarch, the first is nearly as good as anything Macaulay ever wrote in that style (which, to be sure, is not saying much, as he was almost incapable of analyzing and exhibiting the beauties in the great creative works which he admired so much); but its generous enthusiasm and zeal

for the great Florentine, and, indeed, for Italian literature generally, are really touching, and produce an effect on the mind not usually produced by his criticisms.

But by far the most noteworthy of his contributions to Knight's *Magazine* was the *Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton, touching the great Civil War.* We are told that it was his own decided favourite among his earlier efforts in literature; and most correct was his judgment. The introduction to the dialogue, for simplicity and grace, is worthy of Plato:

"It chanced in the warm and beautiful spring of the year 1665, a little before the saddest summer that ever London saw," begins the narrator, "that I went to the Bowling Green at Piccadilly, whither at that time the best gentry made continual resort. There I met Mr. Cowley, who had lately left Barmelms. . . . I entreated him to dine with me at my lodging in the Temple, which he most courteously promised. And that so eminent a guest might not lack better entertainment than cooks or vintners can provide, I sent to the house of Mr. John Milton, in the Artillery Walk, to beg that he would also be my guest, for I hoped that they would think themselves rather united by their common art than divided by their different factions. And so, indeed, it proved. For while we sat at table they talked freely of men and things, as well ancient as modern, with much civility. Nay, Mr. Milton, who seldom tasted wine, both because of his singular temperance and because of his gout, did more than once pledge Mr. Cowley, who was indeed no hermit in diet. At last, being heated, Mr. Milton begged that I would open the windows. 'Nay,' said I, 'if you desire fresh air and coolness, what would hinder us, as the evening is fair, from sailing for an hour on the river?' To this they both cheerfully consented; and forth we walked, Mr. Cowley and I leading Mr. Milton between us to the Temple Stairs. There we took a boat, and thence we were rowed up the river.

"The wind was pleasant, the evening fine; the sky, the earth, and the water beautiful to look upon. But Mr. Cowley and I held our peace, and said nothing of the gay sights around us, lest we should too feelingly remind Mr. Milton of his calamity, whereof he

needed no monitor; for soon he said, sadly: 'Ah, Mr. Cowley, you are a happy man. What would I now give but for one more look at the sun, and the waters, and the gardens of this fair city!'"

There is reason to think that Macaulay's splendid literary faculty was seriously damaged by his early entrance into the conflict of party politics, and that he never wholly recovered from its effect. It destroyed the tender bloom of his mind. As Mr. Pattison has shown that even Milton, when he turned from *Comus* and *Lycidas* to write ferocious pamphlets for twenty years, "left behind him the golden age, and one-half of his poetic genius,"[1] so may we say of Macaulay, that when he turned from such work as this dialogue to parliamentary debate and the distractions of office, he did an injury to his prose, which is none the less great and deplorable because it cannot be accurately measured. But let any one read this beautiful piece of majestic English, then any passage of the History or the Essays which he may like best, and say whether letters have not lost far more than politics have gained by Macaulay's entrance into Parliament. The conduct of the whole dialogue is masterly. Both Milton and Cowley sustain their parts with admirable propriety. It is no sham fight in which one of the interlocutors is a man of straw, set up only to be knocked down. The most telling arguments on the Royalists' side are put into Cowley's mouth, and enunciated with a force which cannot be surpassed. Above all, the splendour and nobility of the diction are such as never visited Macaulay's vigils again. The piece is hardly ever referred to, and appears to be forgotten. Even his most loyal biographer and kinsman waxes cold and doubtful about it. But it remains, and will be remembered, as a promise and pledge of literary

[1] *Milton*, by Mark Pattison, in this series.

power which adverse fate hindered him from fully redeeming.

Macaulay's early success in literature did not improve his relations with his father. On the contrary, he appears to have been chidden for everything he wrote. The ground of complaint was not far to seek: the magazine in which he wrote was a worldly periodical, in which the interests of religion were neglected or offended. The sympathies of most readers will be so strongly in favour of the son, that we cannot do wrong in casting a look of forlorn commiseration on the old Puritan, who felt, with an anguish perhaps never fully expressed, the conviction and the proof growing on him that his son's heart was not as his heart, and that they were parting company as regards the deepest subjects more and more. When Macaulay was a lad at school his father had written to him: "I do long and pray most earnestly that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit may be substituted for vehemence and self-confidence." The good man's hopes and prayers had not been realized, nor was his treatment of his son such that their realization could be expected. But the sense of void and inner bereavement would be none the less bitter and strange, even if the faults of treatment were perceived when it was too late to rectify them, and of this feeling on the father's part there is no evidence. In any case, on no occasion in life did Macaulay show the generosity and tenderness of his nature more admirably than in these seasons of trial and failing sympathy with his father. Troubles without were added to troubles within. When he went to Cambridge his father seemed in prosperous fortune which bordered on affluence. It was understood that he was to be "made in a modest way an eldest son." But a great change had come over Zachary

Macaulay's neglected business. The firm wanted a competent head. The elder partner gave his mind, his time, and his energy to the agitation against the slave-trade. The junior partner, Babington, was not a man to supply his place. Like Cobden, many years afterwards, the elder Macaulay neglected his private affairs for public interests, and he quietly slid down the road which leads to commercial ruin. Then the son showed the sterling stuff of which he was made. He received the first ill-news at Cambridge with "a frolick welcome" of courage and filial devotion. "He was firmly prepared," he said, "to encounter the worst with fortitude, and to do his utmost to retrieve it by exertion." A promise kept to the letter and to the spirit. Not only did he, with the help of his brother Henry, pay off ultimately his father's debts, but he became a second father to his brothers and sisters.

"He quietly took up the burden which his father was unable to bear; and before many years had elapsed the fortunes of all for whose welfare he considered himself responsible were abundantly secured. In the course of the efforts which he expended on the accomplishment of this result, he unlearned the very notion of framing his method of life with a view to his own pleasure; and such was his high and simple nature, that it may well be doubted whether it ever crossed his mind that to live wholly for others was a sacrifice at all."[1]

This was much, and inexpressibly noble; but even this was not all. Not only did Macaulay not give a thought to his own frustrated hopes and prospects; not only did he, a young man, shoulder the burden of a family two generations deep, but he did it with the sunniest radiance, as if not a care rankled in his heart. His sister, Lady Trevelyan, says that those who did not know him then

[1] *Trevelyan*, vol. i. cap. 3.

"never knew him in his most brilliant, witty, and fertile vein." He was life and sunshine to young and old in the sombre house in Great Ormond Street, where the forlorn old father like a blighted oak lingered on in leafless decay, reading one long sermon to his family on Sunday afternoons, and another long sermon on Sunday evenings—"where Sunday walking for walking's sake was never allowed, and even going to a distant church was discouraged." Through this Puritanic gloom Macaulay shot like a sunbeam, and turned it into a fairy scene of innocent laughter and mirth. Against Macaulay the author severe things, and as just as severe, may be said; but as to his conduct in his own home—as a son, as a brother, and an uncle—it is only the barest justice to say that he appears to have touched the furthest verge of human virtue, sweetness, and generosity. His thinking was often, if not generally, pitched in what we must call a low key, but his action might put the very saints to shame. He reversed a practice too common among men of genius, who are often careful to display all their shining and attractive qualities to the outside world, and keep for home consumption their meanness, selfishness, and ill-temper. Macaulay struck no heroic attitude of benevolence, magnanimity, and aspiration before the world—rather the opposite; but in the circle of his home affections he practised those virtues without letting his right hand know what was done by his left.

He was called to the Bar in 1826, and went more than once on the Northern Circuit. But he did not take kindly to the law, got little or no practice, and soon renounced all serious thoughts of the legal profession, even if he ever entertained any. He had, indeed, in the mean time found something a great deal better to do. In October, 1824,

writing to his father, he said: "When I see you in London I will mention to you a piece of secret history," which he conceals for the moment. This referred to an invitation to write for the *Edinburgh Review;* and in the following August, 1825, appeared an article on Milton, which at once arrested the attention of the public, and convinced the shrewder judges that a new force had arisen in literature. The success was splendid and decisive, and produced a great peal of fame. He followed it up with rapid energy, and with his single hand gave a new life to the *Edinburgh Review.* He was already distinguished even in the select circle of promising young men. In 1828 Lord Lyndhurst made him a Commissioner of Bankruptcy. In 1830 his articles on Mill had so struck Lord Lansdowne that he offered him, though quite a stranger, a seat in Parliament for the borough of Calne.

He was now thirty years old. He was a finished classical scholar, and a master of English and Italian literature. French literature he, no doubt, knew well, but not with the same intimacy and sympathy. Of English history he already possessed the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with rare accuracy and grasp. And of all history, ancient or modern, he probably had a competent command. On the other hand, his want of philosophical training does not appear to have been corrected by subsequent studies of a severer kind. All higher speculation seems to have been antipathetic to him. He spoke with respect of Bentham, but there is no evidence that he ever assimilated Bentham's doctrines. He admired Coleridge's poetry, but he did not meddle with his philosophy—which certainly was not very much, but still it was the best representative of speculative thought in England, and full of attraction to ardent young minds. In after-years, when

Macaulay ventured to handle religious and philosophical subjects of a certain depth, this defect in his education made itself felt very plainly. But for the present, and for some time after, it was not perceived. He was abundantly well prepared by natural acuteness and wide reading to make more than a creditable figure amid the loose talk and looser thinking which are the ordinary staple of politics, and to politics he had now come in earnest.

Entering Parliament a few months before the death of George IV., he was just in time to witness the great battle of Reform fought out from beginning to end; to take, indeed, a conspicuous and honourable share in the campaign and final victory. His first speech on the Reform Bill placed him in the front rank of orators, if not of debaters. The Speaker sent for him, and "told him that in all his prolonged experience he had never seen the House in such a state of excitement."[1] Sir Robert Peel paid him a most handsome compliment; and another member was heard to say that he had not heard such speaking since Fox. There can, indeed, be no doubt about the impressiveness and weight of Macaulay's speaking. "Whenever he rose to speak," says Mr. Gladstone, who sat with him in Parliament nearly from the first, "it was a summons like a trumpet-call to fill the benches." It may well be questioned whether Macaulay was so well endowed for any career as that of a great orator. The rapidity of speech suited the impetuosity of his genius far better than the slow labour of composition. He has the true Demosthenic rush in which argument becomes incandescent with passion. To read his speeches by themselves, isolated from the debate in which they were delivered, is to do them injustice. It is only when we read them in *Hansard*

[1] *Trevelyan*, vol. i. cap. 4.

or other contemporary reports that we see how far higher was their plane of thought than that of the best speaking to which they were opposed, or even to that on his own side. It is not going too far to say that he places the question on loftier grounds of state policy than any of his colleagues. In his fourth speech on the Reform Bill, brushing away with disdain the minuter sophistries and special pleading of his opponents, he tells them that the Bill must be carried or the country will be ruined—that it will be carried, whatever they do, but carried by revolution and civil war. "You may make the change tedious, you may make it violent, you may—God in his mercy forbid—you may make it bloody, but avert it you cannot." Even if it were a bad bill, it should be passed, as the less of two evils, compared to withholding it. Then he throws those harpoons of pointed epigram, which are rarely at the command of orators who are not also writers, and which are as wise and true as they are sharp:

"What, then, it is said, would you legislate in haste? Would you legislate in times of great excitement concerning matters of such deep concern? Yes, Sir, I would; and if any bad consequences should follow from the haste and excitement, let those be answerable who, when there was no need of haste, when there existed no excitement, refused to listen to any project of reform; nay, made it an argument against reform that the public mind was not excited.... I allow that hasty legislation is an evil. *But reformers are compelled to legislate fast, just because bigots will not legislate early.* Reformers are compelled to legislate in times of excitement, because bigots will not legislate in times of tranquillity."

Nothing shows more clearly the impression made by this magnificent speech than the pains taken by the Opposition to answer it. Croker, who rose immediately after Macaulay sat down, devoted a two hours' speech exclusive-

ly to answering him; and Croker was one of the ablest debaters of his party. All the best men on that side followed the same line, feeling that Macaulay was really the formidable man. Sir Robert Inglis, Sir Charles Wetherell, Praed, and, finally, the Ajax of the Tories, Sir Robert Peel himself, singled out the "honourable and learned member" for Calne as the foeman most worthy of their steel. No compliment could surpass this.

From the time he entered Parliament till nearly four years afterwards, when he sailed for India, Macaulay's life was one of strenuous and incessant labour, such as has been hardly ever surpassed in the lives of the busiest men. Besides his Parliamentary duties he had official work—first as Commissioner, and then as Secretary to the Board of Control; and in consequence of the frequent indisposition of his chief, Mr. Charles Grant, the whole labour of the office often devolved upon him. He was one of the lions of London Society, and a constant guest at Holland House — the imperious mistress of which scolded, flattered, and caressed him with a patronizing condescension that would not have been to every person's taste. He was on intimate terms with Rogers, Moore, Campbell, Luttrel, and the other wits of the day, and he more than held his own as a talker and a wit. And all this time he was writing those articles for the *Edinburgh Review* which, perhaps, are often unwittingly assumed to have been his main occupation. They were, in truth, struck off in hastily snatched moments of leisure, saved with a miserly thrift from public and official work, by rising at five and writing till breakfast. Thirteen articles, from the *Essay on Robert Montgomery* to the first *Essay on Lord Chatham*, inclusive, were written amidst these adverse conditions. We are bound in com-

mon equity to remember this fact, when inclined to find fault with either the matter or the manner of Macaulay's Essays. They were not the meditated compositions of a student wooing his muse in solitude and repose, crooning over his style and maturing his thought; but the rapid effusions of a man immersed in business, contesting populous boroughs, sitting up half the night in Parliament, passing estimates connected with his office, and making speeches on *la haute politique* to the Commons of England. Mr. Gladstone, who remembers the splendour of his early fame, does justice to the "immense distinction" which Macaulay had attained long before middle life, and justly remarks that, except the second Pitt and Lord Byron, no Englishman had ever won, at so early an age, such wide and honourable renown.

And behind this renown, unknown to the world, but more honourable than the renown itself, were facts which must for ever embalm Macaulay's memory with a fragrance of lofty and unselfish virtue. The Whig Government, bent on economy, brought in a bill to reform the Bankruptcy jurisdiction. He voted for the measure, though it suppressed his Commissionership, and left him penniless; for at about the time his Trinity Fellowship also expired. He was reduced to such straits that he was forced to sell the gold medals he had won at Cambridge; and, as he said at a later date, he did not know where to turn for a morsel of bread. This did not last long, and his appointment to the Board of Control placed him in relative comfort. But presently a new difficulty arose. The Government introduced their Slavery Bill; which, though a liberal proposal, did not satisfy the fanatics of the abolitionist party, among whom Zachary Macaulay stood in the first rank. His son made up his mind in a moment. He declared to his

colleagues and his chiefs that he could not go counter to his father. "He has devoted his whole life to the question; and I cannot grieve him by giving way, when he wishes me to stand firm." He placed his resignation in the hands of Lord Althorp, and freely criticized as an independent member the measure of his own Government. He told his leader that he did not expect such insubordination to be overlooked; and that if he were a Minister he would not allow it. Such noble independence had its reward. He wrote to his sister Hannah: "I have resigned my office, and my resignation has been refused. I have spoken and voted against the Ministry under which I hold my place. . . . I am as good friends with the Ministers as ever." Well might Sydney Smith say that Macaulay was incorruptible.

Still, the *res angusta domi* was pressing hard upon, not so much himself as his family, of which he was now the main support. With his official salary, and with what he earned by writing for the *Edinburgh*—which, by the way, never seems to have exceeded two hundred pounds per annum — he was beyond the pressure of immediate want. If he had been out of office and at leisure, he, no doubt, would have gained far more by his pen. But, as he pointedly put it, he was resolved to write only because his mind was full—not because his pockets were empty. He accepted the post of legal adviser to the Supreme Council of India, from which he was sure to return with some twenty thousand pounds, saved out of his salary. In his position it is difficult, even judging after the event, to say that he could have acted more wisely and prudently than he did. But the sacrifice was great — and probably he knew it as well as any one, though, with his usual cheery stoicism, he said nothing about it. The exile from Eng-

land, and even removal from English politics, were probably a gain. But the postponement of his monumental work in literature was a serious misfortune. The precious hours of health and vigour were speeding away, and the great work was not begun, nor near beginning. He sailed for Madras, February 15, 1834.

He spent the time during his voyage in a very characteristic manner—by reading all the way. "Except at meals," he said, "I hardly exchanged a word with any human being. I devoured Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, and English; folios, quartos, octavos, duodecimos." He always had an immoderate passion for reading, on which he never seems to have thought of putting the slightest restraint. When in India he writes to his sister, Mrs. Cropper, saying that he would like nothing so well as to bury himself in some great library, and never pass a waking hour without a book before him. And as a matter of fact, except when engaged in business or composition, this seems to have been what he actually did. He walked about London, reading; he roamed through the lanes of Surrey, reading; and even the new and surprising spectacle of the sea—so suggestive of reverie and brooding thought—could not seduce him from his books. His appetite was so keen as to be almost undiscriminating. He was constantly reading worthless novels which he despised. Once he is shocked himself, and exclaims in his diary: "Why do I read such trash?" One would almost say that his mind was naturally vacant when left to itself, and needed the thoughts of others to fill up the void. How otherwise are we to account for the following extraordinary statement, under his own hand? He was on a journey to Ireland:

"I read between London and Bangor the lives of the emperors from Maximin to Carinus, inclusive, in the Augustan history. . . . We sailed as soon as we got on board. I put on my great-coat and sat on deck during the whole voyage. *As I could not read*, I used an excellent substitute for reading. I went through *Paradise Lost* in my head. I could still repeat half of it, and that the best half."

The complaint is that Macaulay's writings lack meditation and thoughtfulness. Can it be wondered at, when we see the way in which he passed his leisure hours? One would have supposed that an historian and statesman, sailing for Ireland in the night on that Irish sea, would have been visited by thoughts too full and bitter and mournful to have left him any taste even for the splendours of Milton's verse. He was about to write on Ireland and the battle of the Boyne; and he had got up the subject with his usual care before starting. Is it not next to incredible that he could have thought of anything else than that pathetic, miserable, humiliating story of the connexion between the two islands? And he knew that story better than most men. Yet it did not kindle his mind on such an occasion as this. There was a defect of deep sensibility in Macaulay—a want of moral draught and earnestness, which is characteristic of his writing and thinking. His acute intellect and nimble fancy are not paired with an emotional endowment of corresponding weight and volume. His endless and aimless reading was the effect, not the cause, of this disposition. While in India he read more classics in one year than a Cambridge undergraduate who was preparing to compete for the Chancellor's medals.[1] But this incessant reading was directed

[1] "I have cast up my reading account, and brought it to the end of 1835. It includes December, 1834. During the last thirteen months I have read Æschylus twice, Sophocles twice, Euripides once,

by no aim, to no purpose—was prompted by no idea on which he wished to throw light, no thoughtful conception which needed to be verified and tested. Macaulay's omnivorous reading is often referred to as if it were a title to honour; it was far more of the nature of a defect. It is, by-the-way, a curious circumstance, that while on the one hand we are always told of his extraordinary memory, insomuch that he only needed to read a passage even once casually for it to be impressed on his mind for ever afterwards, on the other we find that he read the same books over and over again, and that at very short intervals. In the reading account just given we see that he read several authors twice in one year. But I happen to possess a copy of Lysias, which belonged to him, which shows that he carried the practice much further. He had the excellent habit of marking in pencil the date of his last perusal of an author, and in the book referred to it appears that he read the speech Pro Cæde Eratosthenis three times within a year, and five times altogether; and with most of the speeches it was the same, though that one appears to have been his favourite. In September and October, 1837, he appears to have read all Lysias through twice over. Now, what could be the meaning or the motive of these repeated perusals? In the case of

Pindar twice, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, Quintus Calaber, Theocritus twice, Herodotus, Thucydides, almost all Xenophon's works, almost all Plato, Aristotle's *Politics*, and a good deal of his *Organon*, besides dipping elsewhere in him; the whole of Plutarch's *Lives*, about half of Lucian, two or three books of Athenæus, Plautus twice, Terence twice, Lucretius twice, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, Lucan, Statius, Silius Italicus, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Sallust, Cæsar, and lastly Cicero. I have, indeed, still a little of Cicero left, but I shall finish him in a few days. I am now deep in Aristophanes and Lucian."

a man with a wretched memory, who was about to undergo an examination, we could understand them. But Macaulay's memory bordered on the miraculous, and he only read to please himself. It seems very strange that a serious man should thus dispose of his spare moments. How dry the inward spring of meditation must have been to remotely allow of such an employment of time! That a finished scholar, however busy, should now and then solace himself with a Greek play or a few books of Homer, would only show that he had kept open the windows of his mind, and had not succumbed to the dusty drudgery of life. But this was not Macaulay's case. He read with the ardour of a professor compiling a lexicon, without a professor's object or valid motive. He wanted a due sense of the relative importance of books and studies.

It behooves a critic to be cautious in finding fault with Macaulay, as generally he will discover that, before he has done blaming him for one thing, he has to begin praising him warmly for another. His career in India is an instance in point. However excessive his taste for reading may have been, he never allowed that or any other private inclination to interfere with the practical work which lay before him. In Calcutta, as in London, he showed the same power of strenuous, unremitting labour, which never seemed to know satiety or fatigue. Besides his official duties as Member of Council, he at once assumed, voluntarily and gratuitously, an enormous addition to his burden of work by becoming chairman of two important committees: the Committee of Public Instruction and the committee appointed to draw up the new codes—the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure. He rarely failed to arrogate to himself the lion's share of

any hard work within his reach. But on this occasion, owing to the frequent illness of his colleagues, he had at times to undertake the greater part of the task himself. The Penal Code and the notes appended to it are, perhaps, one of his most durable titles to fame. On such a subject I can have no opinion; but this is the way in which Mr. Justice Stephen speaks of it:

"Lord Macaulay's great work was too daring and original to be accepted at once. It was a draft when he left India in 1838. The draft . . . and the revision (by Sir Barnes Peacock) are both eminently creditable to their authors, and the result of their successive efforts has been to reproduce in a concise and even beautiful form the spirit of the law of England. . . . The point which always has surprised me most in connexion with the Penal Code is, that it proves that Lord Macaulay must have had a knowledge of English criminal law which, considering how little he had practised it, may fairly be called extraordinary. He must have possessed the gift of going at once to the very root of the matter, and of sifting the corn from the chaff, to a most unusual degree, for his draft gives the substance of the criminal law of England, down to its minute working details, in a compass which by comparison with the original may be regarded as almost ludicrously small. The Indian Penal Code is to the English criminal law what a manufactured article ready for use is to the materials out of which it is made. It is to the French Code Pénal, and I may add the North German Code of 1871, what a finished picture is to a sketch. It is far simpler and much better expressed than Livingstone's Code of Louisiana, and its practical success has been complete. The clearest proof of this is, that hardly any questions have arisen upon it which have had to be determined by the Courts, and that few and slight amendments have had to be made by the Legislature."[1]

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[1] *Trevelyan*, vol. i. cap. 6. Macaulay's labours on the Penal Code, the value of which no one disputes, are sometimes spoken of in a way which involves considerable injustice to his fellow-commissioners, whose important share in the work is tacitly ignored. The Penal

On the Education Committee he rendered, perhaps, equal service, though it may not be so generally known. The members of the Board were evenly divided as to the character of the instruction to be given to the natives. Five were for continuing the old encouragement of Oriental learning, and five for the introduction of English literature and European science. It is hardly necessary to say into which scale Macaulay threw his influence. The opinion of the Government was determined by an elaborate minute which he drew up on the subject, and Lord William Bentinck decided that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India."

Macaulay was very unpopular with a portion of the English residents in Calcutta, chiefly, it would seem, in consequence of a useful reform which he helped to introduce, affecting the jurisdiction of the provincial courts of

Code, together with the Report and Notes, are often referred to as if they were Macaulay's exclusive work. For this assumption there is no ground, and Macaulay himself never laid claim to anything of the kind. When the illness of his colleagues deprived him temporarily of their assistance he naturally mentioned the fact in his familiar correspondence; but this does not justify the conclusion that he did all the work himself. Serious as were the interruptions caused by the illness of the other commissioners, they were the exceptions, not the rule. Before the rainy season of the year 1836 the Commission had been in full work for a whole year, and nothing is said as to sickness during all that time. Moreover, even when suffering from bad health, Sir John Macleod maintained on the subject of their joint labours daily communication with Macaulay, who submitted all he wrote to the criticism of his friend, and repeated modifications of the first draft were the result. This being so, it is not easy to see the equity of calling the Penal Code "Macaulay's great work," as Sir James Stephen does, or why the Report and Notes should appear in the Library edition of Macaulay's writings.

Bengal. The change appears to have been a wise one, and generally accepted as such. But it was unfavourable to certain interests in the capital, and these attacked Macaulay in the Press with the most scurrilous and indecent virulence. The foulness of the abuse was such that he could not allow the papers to lie in his sister's drawing-room. Cheat, swindler, charlatan, and tyrant were only the milder epithets with which he was assailed, and a suggestion to lynch him made at a public meeting was received with rapturous applause. He bore this disgraceful vituperation with the most unruffled equanimity. He did more: he vigorously advocated and supported the freedom of the Press at the very moment when it was attacking him with the most rancorous invective. Macaulay had in him a vein of genuine magnanimity.

His period of exile in India drew to its close at the end of the year 1837. In the midst of his official work and multifarious reading he had written two articles for the *Edinburgh Review*, one on Mackintosh's *History of the Revolution;* the other his rather too famous Essay on Bacon. He made his plans for learning German on the voyage home. "People tell me that it is a hard language," he wrote to his friend Ellis, "but I cannot easily believe that there is a language which I cannot master in four months by working ten hours a day." He did learn German in the time prescribed; but, except to read Goethe and Schiller and parts of Lessing, he never seems to have made much use of it. However, his object in going to India was now attained. He had realized a modest fortune, but ample for his simple wants and tastes. After an unusually long voyage he reached England in the middle of the year 1838. His father had died while he was on the ocean.

Within a few weeks he had contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* one of the best of his essays, that on Sir William Temple. In October he left England for a tour in Italy.

The first visit to Italy is always an epoch in the life of a cultivated mind. Probably few pilgrims to the classic land were ever better prepared than Macaulay by reading and turn of thought to receive the unique impressions of such a journey. He was equally capable of appreciating both the antiquities, the Pagan and the Christian, of which Italy is the guardian. Fortunately, he kept a journal of his travels, from which a few extracts have been published. They show Macaulay in his most attractive and engaging mood. A want of reverence for the men of genius of past ages is not one of the sins which lie at his door. On the contrary, after family affection it was perhaps the strongest emotion of his mind. He now had an opportunity of indulging it such as he had never had before. Here are a few extracts from his journal:

"*Florence, November* 9, 1838.—To the Church of Santa Croce—an ugly, mean outside, and not much to admire in the architecture within" (shade of Mr. Ruskin!), "but consecrated by the dust of some of the greatest men that ever lived. It was to me what a first visit to Westminster Abbey would be to an American. The first tomb that caught my eye as I entered was that of Michael Angelo. I was much moved, and still more so when, going forward, I saw the stately monument lately erected to Dante. The figure of the poet seemed to me fine, and finely placed, and the inscription very happy—his own words—the proclamation which resounds through the shades when Virgil returns:

'Onorate l'altissimo poeta.'

The two allegorical figures were not much to my taste. It is particularly absurd to represent Poetry weeping for Dante. . . . Yet I was very near shedding tears of a different kind as I looked at this mag-

nificent monument, and thought of the sufferings of the great poet, and of his incomparable genius, and of all the pleasure which I have derived from him, and of his death in exile, and of the late justice of posterity. I believe that very few people have ever had their minds more thoroughly penetrated with the spirit of any great work than mine is with that of the *Divine Comedy.* His execution I take to be far beyond that of any other artist who has operated on the imagination by means of words—

> 'O degli altri poeti onore e lume,
> Vagliami il lungo studio e 'l grande amore
> Che m' han fatto cercar lo tuo volume.'

I was proud to think that I had a right to apostrophize him thus. I went on, and next I came to the tomb of Alfieri. I passed forward, and in another minute my foot was on the grave of Machiavel."

At Rome he is almost overpowered.

"*November* 18.—On arriving this morning I walked straight from the hotel door to St. Peter's. I was so excited by the expectation of what I was to see that I could notice nothing else. I was quite nervous. The colonnade in front is noble—very, very noble; yet it disappointed me, and would have done so had it been the portico of Paradise. In I went. I was for a minute fairly stunned by the magnificence and harmony of the interior. I never in my life saw, and never, I suppose, shall see again, anything so astonishingly beautiful. I really could have cried with pleasure. I rambled about for half an hour or more, paying little or no attention to details, but enjoying the effect of the sublime whole.

"In rambling back to the Piazza di Spagna I found myself before the portico of the Pantheon. I was as much struck and affected as if I had not known that there was such a building in Rome. There it was, the work of the age of Augustus—the work of men who lived with Cicero and Cæsar, and Horace and Virgil."

He never seems to have felt annoyed, as some have been, by the intermingling of Christian and Pagan Rome, and is at a loss to say which interested him most. He was already meditating his essay on the history of the

Popes, and throwing into his *Lays of Ancient Rome* those geographical and topographical touches which set his spirited stanzas ringing in the ear of a traveller in Rome at every turn.

"I then went to the river, to the spot where the old Pons Sublicius stood, and looked about to see how my *Horatius* agreed with the topography. Pretty well; but his house must be on Mount Palatine, for he could never see Mount Cœlius from the spot where he fought."

But, like all active minds to whom hard work has become a habit, Macaulay soon grew weary of the idleness of travelling. He never went further south than Naples, and turned away from the Campagna, leaving the delights of an Italian spring untasted, to seek his labour and his books at home. He reached London early in February, 1839, and fell to work with the eager appetite of a man who has had a long fast. In less than three weeks he had read and reviewed Mr. Gladstone's book on *Church and State.* But he was not destined to enjoy his leisure long. The expiring Whig Ministry of Lord Melbourne needed all the support they could obtain: he was brought into Parliament as member for Edinburgh, and soon after admitted into the Cabinet as Secretary-at-War.

This return to office and Parliament was an uncompensated loss to literature, and no gain to politics. The Whig Ministry was past saving; and Macaulay could gain no distinction by fighting their desperate battle. He felt himself that he was wasting his time. "I pine," he wrote, "for liberty and ease, and freedom of speech and freedom of pen." For this political interlude had necessitated the laying aside of his History, which he had already begun. He had now reached an age at which an author who meditates a great work has no time to lose.

He was just turned forty; a judicious economy of his time and resources would have seen him a long way towards the performance of the promise with which his great work opens—"I purpose to write the history of England from the accession of King James II. down to a time which is within the memory of men still living." It is impossible to read the forecast he made of his work on the eve of his journey to Italy without a pang of regret, and sense of a loss not easily estimated.

"As soon as I return I shall seriously commence my History. The first part (which I think will take up five octavo volumes) will extend from the Revolution to the commencement of Sir Robert Walpole's long administration—a period of three or four and thirty very eventful years. From the commencement of Walpole's administration to the commencement of the American war, events may be despatched more concisely. From the commencement of the American war it will again become necessary to be copious. How far I shall bring the narrative down I have not determined. The death of George IV. would be the best halting place."

It was all in his mind. He had gone over the ground again and again. What a panorama he would have unfolded! what battle-pieces we should have had of Marlborough's campaigns! what portraits of Bolingbroke, Peterborough, Prince Eugene, and the rest! It is a sad pity that Lord Melbourne, who was fond of letting things alone, could not leave Macaulay alone, but must needs yoke the celestial steed to his parliamentary plough. Or, to put it more fairly, it is a pity that Macaulay himself had not sufficient nerve, and consciousness of his mission, to resist the tempter. But he was loyal to a degree of chivalry to his political friends who were in difficulties. He was, as his sister's writing-master said, a "lump of good-nature;" and, without a full consciousness of the

sacrifice he was making, he gave up to party what was meant for literature.

But he had a parliamentary triumph of no common kind—one of the two instances in which, as Mr. Gladstone says, "he arrested the successful progress of legislative measures, and slew them at a moment's notice, and by his single arm." The case was Serjeant Talfourd's Copyright Bill. His conduct on this occasion has been strangely questioned by Miss Martineau, who wonders how an able literary man could utter such a speech, and hints "at some cause which could not be alleged for such a man exposing himself in a speech unsound in its whole argument." In any case, Macaulay had much more to lose by the line he took than Miss Martineau. No one, we may suppose at present, can read the oration in question without entire conviction of the single-minded sense of duty and elevated public spirit which animated him on this occasion. Nothing can be more judicial than the way in which he balances the respective claims to consideration of authors and the general public. In the following year he had a similar victory over Lord Mahon; and the present law of copyright was framed in accordance with his proposals, slightly modified. Macaulay made a most advantageous contrast to his brother authors in this matter. Even the "writer of books" who petitioned from Chelsea showed that he had considered the subject to much less purpose.

Lord Melbourne's Government fell in June, 1841; and the general election which followed gave the Tories a crushing majority. Macaulay was freed from "that closely watched slavery which is mocked with the name of power." He welcomed the change with exuberant delight. He still retained his seat for Edinburgh, and spoke

occasionally in the House; but he was liberated from the wasteful drudgery of office.

Here it will be well to interrupt this personal sketch of the writer, and proceed to a consideration of some of his work. But, for the purpose of making clear some allusions in the two following chapters, we may state in anticipation that he had a serious attack of illness in the year 1852, from which he never entirely recovered.

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTERISTICS.

MACAULAY belongs to a class of writers whom critics do not always approach with sufficient circumspection and diffidence—the class, namely, of writers whose merits and defects appear to be so obvious that there is no mistaking them. When dealing with writers of this kind, we are apt to think our task much easier and simpler than it really is. Writers of startling originality and depth, difficult as it may be to appraise them justly, yet, as it were, warn critics to be on their guard and take their utmost pains. Lesser writers, again, but of odd and peculiar flavour, are nearly sure of receiving adequate attention. But there are writers who belong to neither of these classes, whose merit consists neither in profound originality nor special flavour, but in a general wide eloquence and power, coupled with a certain commonplaceness of thought, of whom Cicero may be taken as the supreme type, and by those writers critics are liable to be deceived—in two ways. Either they admire the eloquence so much that they are blind to other deficiencies, or they perceive the latter so clearly that they fail to do justice to the other merits. On no writer have more opposite judgments been passed than on Cicero. By some he has been regarded as one of the loftiest geniuses of antiquity; by others as a shallow, ver-

bose, and ignorant pretender; and perhaps to this day Cicero's exact position in literature has not been settled. It is to be hoped that Macaulay, who has a certain distant resemblance to Cicero, will not be so long in finding his proper place.

That something like a reaction against Macaulay's fame has recently set in, can hardly be doubted. It was, indeed, to be expected that something of the kind would occur. Such reactions against the fame of great authors frequently appear in the generation which follows the period of their first splendour. New modes of thought and sentiment arise, amid which the celebrity of a recent past appears old-fashioned, with little of the grace which clothes the genuinely old. We cannot be surprised if a fate which overtook Pope, Voltaire, and Byron should now overtake Macaulay. But those writers have risen anew into the firmament of literature, from which they are not likely to fall again. The question is, whether Macaulay will ultimately join them as a fixed star, and if so, of what magnitude? It would be against analogy if such a wide and resonant fame as his were to suffer permanent eclipse. Hasty reputations, due to ephemeral circumstances, may utterly die out, but it would not be easy to name a really great fame among contemporaries which has not been largely ratified by posterity. Few authors have had greater contemporary fame than Macaulay. It spread through all classes and countries like an epidemic. Foreign courts and learned societies vied with the multitude in doing him honour. He was read with almost equal zest in cultivated European capitals and in the scattered settlements of remote colonies. The Duke of Wellington was loud in his praise. Professor Ranke called him an incomparable man; and a body of

English workmen sent him a vote of thanks for having written a history which working-men could understand. An author who collects suffrages from such opposite quarters as these must have had the secret of touching a deep common chord in human nature. It is the business of criticism to find out what that chord was.

Macaulay's great quality is that of being one of the best story-tellers that ever lived; and if we limit the competition to his only proper rivals—the historians—he may be pronounced *the* best story-teller. If any one thinks these superlatives misplaced, let him mention the historical writers whom he would put on a level with or above Macaulay—always remembering that the comparison is limited to this particular point: the art of telling a story with such interest and vivacity that readers have no wish but to read on. If the area of comparison be enlarged so as to include questions of intellectual depth, moral insight, and sundry other valuable qualities, the competition turns against Macaulay, who at once sinks many degrees in the scale. But in his own line he has no rival. And let no one undervalue that line. He kindled a fervent human interest in past and real events which novelists kindle in fictitious events. He wrote of the seventeenth century with the same vivid sense of present reality which Balzac and Thackeray had when they wrote of the nineteenth century, which was before their eyes. And this was the peculiarity which fascinated contemporaries, and made them so lavish of praise and admiration. They felt, and very justly, that history had never been so written before. It was a quality which all classes, of all degrees of culture, could almost equally appreciate. But it produced a feeling of gratitude among the more experienced judges which seems likely to pass

away. All the younger generation, who have grown to manhood since Macaulay wrote, have become intimately acquainted with his writings at too early an age to appreciate what an innovator he was in his day. Besides, he has had numerous able though inferior imitators. The younger folk therefore see nothing surprising that history should be made as entertaining as a novel. But twenty or thirty years ago the case was very different. Lord Carlisle, when he finished the fifth (posthumous) volume, said he was "in despair to close that brilliant-pictured page." It will generally be found that old men who were not far from being Macaulay's equals in age are still enthusiastic in his praise. It is the younger generation, who have come to maturity since his death, who see a good deal to censure in him, and not very much to admire. The late Sir James Stephen said "he could forgive him anything, and was violently tempted to admire even his faults." Mr. Leslie Stephen, his son, is one of the most penetrating and severe of Macaulay's critics.

There is evidently a misunderstanding here which needs removing. It is another instance of the opposite sides of the shield producing discrepant opinions as to its colour. Those who admire Macaulay, and those who blame him, are thinking of different things. His admirers are thinking of certain brilliant qualities in which he has hardly ever been surpassed. His censors, passing these by with hasty recognition, point to grave defects, and ask if such are compatible with real greatness. Each party should be led to adopt part of his opponent's view, without surrendering what is true in his own. Macaulay's eminence as a *raconteur* should not only be admitted with cold assent, but proclaimed supreme and unrivalled in its own way, as it really is. On the other hand, his serious deficiencies

in other ways should be acknowledged with equal frankness.

One of his most remarkable qualities as a writer is his power of interesting the reader and holding his attention. It is a gift by itself, and not very easy to analyze. Some of the greatest writers have wanted it.

Dr. Johnson, speaking of Prior's *Solomon* and the partiality with which its author regarded it, says:

"His affection was natural; it had undoubtedly been written with great labour, and who is willing to think that he has been labouring in vain? He had infused into it much knowledge and much thought; he had polished it often to elegance, and often dignified it with splendour, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity. He perceived in it many excellences, and did not discover that it wanted that without which all others are of small avail—the power of engaging attention and alluring curiosity. Tediousness is the most fatal of faults."

Of the truth of this last remark there is no doubt. But what was the secret of the tediousness of the poem *Solomon*, which, according to Johnson, was almost as great a paragon as the Hebrew monarch after whom it was named? A work on which great labour had been spent, which contained thought and knowledge, which had polish, elegance, splendour, and occasionally sublimity, one would have thought was not likely to be dull. As a matter of fact, *Solomon* is dead and buried fathoms deep in its own dulness. In this special case Johnson gives at least one good reason, but he throws no light on the general question of dulness—in what it consists, by which we might also explain in what interest consists. It appears that Macaulay himself was puzzled with the same difficulty. "Where lies," he asks, somewhat unjustly, with reference to a novel of Lord Lytton, "the secret of being

amusing? and how is it that art, eloquence, and diligence may all be employed in making a book dull?"

Few authors have had in larger degree than Macaulay "the secret of being amusing," of "engaging attention and alluring curiosity," as Dr. Johnson says. He is rarely, perhaps never, absolutely dull. On the other hand, he is not too lively and stimulating, and avoids, therefore, producing that sense of fatigue in the reader which even genuine wit, if there is too much of it, is apt to engender. He had the talent which he concedes to Walpole, of writing what people like to read. Perhaps the secret of his charm lay in this: first, that he was deeply interested himself in the subjects that he handles. His *bonâ fide* wish to do them justice—to impart his knowledge—is not hampered by any anxious self-consciousness as to the impression he himself is making. His manner is straightforward and frank, and therefore winning, and he communicates the interest he feels. Secondly, he was an adept in the art of putting himself *en rapport* with his reader—of not going too fast, or too far, or too deep for the ordinary intelligence. He takes care not only to be clear in language, but to follow a line of thought from which obscurity and even twilight are excluded. His attention, indeed, to the needs of dull readers was excessive, and has risked the esteem of readers of another kind. He often steered too near the shoals of commonplace to suit the taste of many persons; still, he never fairly runs aground. He has one great merit which can be appreciated by all—his thought is always well within his reach, and is unfolded with complete mastery and ease to its uttermost filament. He is never vague, shadowy, and incomplete. The reader is never perplexed by ideas imperfectly grasped, by thoughts which the writer cannot fully express. On the

other hand, his want of aspiration, of all effort to rise into the higher regions of thought, has lost him in the opinion of many readers. He is one of the most entertaining, but also one of the least suggestive, of writers.

His powers of brilliant illustration have never been denied, and it would not be easy to name their equal. His command of perfectly apposite and natural, yet not at all obvious, images is not more wonderful than the ease with which they are introduced. Few readers are likely to have forgotten the impression they once made on the youthful mind. It was something quite new and almost bewildering, like the first night at the play. He can conjure up in a moment a long vista of majestic similes, which attracts the eye like a range of snow-capped mountains. Take, for instance, the opening passages of the articles on *Lord Clive* and *Ranke's History of the Popes.* As soon as the curtain rises a grand panorama seems spread out before us. The first begins with a comparison between the English conquests of India and the Spanish conquest of America. But notice how pictorially it is done:

"The people of India when we subdued them were ten times as numerous as the Americans whom the Spaniards vanquished, and were at the same time quite as highly civilized as the victorious Spaniards. They had reared cities larger and fairer than Saragossa and Toledo, and buildings more beautiful and costly than the Cathedral of Seville. They could show bankers richer than the richest firms of Barcelona or Cadiz; viceroys whose splendour far surpassed that of Ferdinand the Catholic; myriads of cavalry and long trains of artillery which would have astonished the Great Captain."

The passage is spoiled by mutilation; but readers can turn to it if they do not remember it. In the same way, the article on the Popes opens with a truly grand picture: "No other institution" (save the Papacy) "is left stand-

ing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian Amphitheatre." Again: "She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot in Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the Temple of Mecca." The sensitive youth feels his breath catch at illustrations like these. If they pall on the older mind, it is because they are found to be addressed almost exclusively to the eye: they are followed by nothing of importance addressed to the reason. We shall have occasion to see that this sumptuous opening of the article on the Popes leads to a disquisition at once inaccurate in facts and superficial in argument.

Macaulay's talent as an historical artist will be considered at some length when we come to examine the *History of England*. It will be sufficient in this general view to remark the skill with which he has overcome the peculiar difficulties of historical composition. The great difficulty in drawing the picture of a complex society in a past age is to combine unity with breadth of composition. In a long narrative only a very small portion of the picture can be seen at one time. The whole is never presented at one moment with concentrated effect, such as the painter can command, who places on one canvas, which can be easily surveyed, all that he has to tell us. The historian cannot bring all his troops on the ground at once and strike the mind by a wide and magnificent display. He is reduced to a march past in narrow file. The danger, therefore, is that the effect of the whole will be feeble or lost. In the hands of a weak man a thin stream of narrative meanders on, but a broad

view is nowhere obtained. The lowest form of historical writing is the chronicle, or mere annals, in which a broad view is not so much as aimed at. In great historical work the immediate portion of the narrative passing before the reader's eye is always kept in subordinate relation to the whole drama of which it forms a part. And this is the problem, to keep the whole suggestively before the reader while only a part is being shown. Only a strong imagination is equal to this task. The mind of the writer must hold the entire picture suspended in his fancy while he is painting each separate portion of it. And he paints each separate portion of it with a view to its fitness and relation to the whole.

No fair critic will deny that Macaulay's execution in all these respects is simply masterly. The two volumes which comprise the reign of James II. in spite of their abundant detail are as truly an organic whole as a sonnet. Though the canvas is crowded in every part with events and characters, there is no confusion, no obstruction to clear vision. Wherever we stand we seem to be opposite to the centre of the picture. However interested we may be in a part, we are never allowed to lose sight of the whole. The compelling force of the writer's imagination always keeps it in a latent suggestive way before our minds. And all this is done under a self-imposed burden which is without example. For, in obedience to his canon as to how history should be written, the author has weighted himself with a load of minute detail such as no historian ever uplifted before. He hardly ever mentions a site, a town, a castle, a manor-house, he rarely introduces even a subordinate character, without bringing in a picturesque anecdote, an association, a reminiscence out of his boundless stores of knowledge,

which sparkles like a gem on the texture of his narrative. Nothing can exceed the skill with which these little vignettes are thrown in, and they are incessant; yet they never seem to be in the way, or to hinder the main effect. Take as an instance this short reference to the Earl of Craven. It occurs in the very crisis of the story, when James II. was a prisoner in his own palace, between his first and second attempts to fly the country:

"James, while his fate was under discussion, remained at Whitehall, fascinated, as it seemed, by the greatness and nearness of the danger, and unequal to the exertion of either struggling or flying. In the evening news came that the Dutch had occupied Chelsea and Kensington. The King, however, prepared to go to rest as usual. The Coldstream Guards were on duty at the palace. They were commanded by William, Earl of Craven, an aged man, who, more than fifty years before, had been distinguished in war and love, who had led the forlorn hope at Creutznach with such courage that he had been patted on the shoulder by the great Gustavus, and who was believed to have won from a thousand rivals the heart of the unfortunate Queen of Bohemia. Craven was now in his eightieth year; yet time had not tamed his spirit. It was past ten o'clock when he was informed that three battalions of the Prince's foot, mingled with some troops of horse, were pouring down the long avenue of St. James's Park, with matches lighted, and in full readiness for action. Count Solmes, who commanded the foreigners, said that his orders were to take military possession of the posts round Whitehall, and exhorted Craven to retire peaceably. Craven swore that he would rather be cut to pieces; but when the King, who was undressing himself, learned what was passing he forbade the stout old soldier to attempt a resistance which must have been ineffectual."

How truly artistic! and how much Craven's conduct is explained and heightened by that little touch recalling Creutznach, the forlorn hope, and the Great Gustavus! What a vista up the seventeenth century to the far off Thirty Years' War is opened in a moment! I recall no

writer who is Macaulay's equal in this art of covering his larger surfaces with minute work which is never out of place. Like the delicate sculpture on the sandals of Athene, in the Parthenon, it detracts nothing from the grandeur of the statue. Or, to take a more appropriate figure, it resembles a richly decorated Gothic porch, in which every stone is curiously carved, and yet does its duty in bearing the weight of the mighty arch as well as if it were perfectly plain.

There are only two modern men with whom he can be worthily compared, Michelet and Carlyle. Both are his superiors in what Mr. Ruskin calls penetrative imagination. Both have an insight into the moral world and the mind of man, of which he is wholly incapable. Both have a simple directness of vision, the real poet's eye for nature and character, which he entirely lacks. Carlyle especially can emit a lightning flash, which makes Macaulay's prose, always a little pompous in his ambitious flights, burn dim and yellow. But on another side Macaulay has his revenge. For clear, broad width, for steadiness of view and impartiality of all-round presentations, he is their superior. Carlyle's dazzling effects of white light are frequently surrounded by the blackest gloom. Even that lovely "evening sun of July"—in a well-known passage of the *French Revolution*—emerges only for a moment from a dark cloud, which speedily obscures it again. Michelet's light is less fitful than Carlyle's; it is, perhaps, also less brilliant. Macaulay's light, pale in comparison with their meteoric splendours, has the advantage of being equal and steady, and free from the danger of going out. There is yet another quality in which he gains by comparison with the strongest men—the art of historical perspective. His scenes are always placed at the right dis-

tance for taking in their full effect. The vividness of Carlyle's imagination often acts like a powerful telescope, and brings objects too near the observer. The events in the French Revolution very often appear as if enacted under our windows. What is just in front of us we see with almost oppressive distinctness, but the eye cannot range over a wide yet perfectly visible panorama. Macaulay never falls into this error. His pictures are always far enough off for the whole sweep of the prospect to be seen with ease. He seems to lead us up to a lofty terrace overlooking a spacious plain which lies spread out below. For size, power, and brightness, if not always purity of colour, he has some title to be called the Rubens of historians.

Admitting all, or a portion, of what is thus advanced, the opposition to Macaulay has a very serious counterstatement to offer. The chief complaint—and it is sufficiently grave — is of a constant and pervading want of depth, either of thought or sentiment. Macaulay, it is said, did little or nothing to stir the deeper mind or the deeper feelings of his multitude of readers.

As regards the first charge, want of intellectual depth, it is not easy to imagine even the semblance of a defence. Indeed, Macaulay owns his guilt with a certain amount of bravado. He has expressed his contempt of all higher speculation with too much scorn to leave any room for doubt or apology on that head. He never refers to philosophy except in a tone of disparagement and sneer. "Such speculations are in a peculiar manner the delight of intelligent children and half-civilized men." Among the speculations thus dismissed with derision are the questions of "the necessity of human actions and the foundation of moral obligation." Thus, Macaulay disbelieved in the possibility of ethical science. Of a translation of Kant

which had been sent him he speaks with amusing airs of superiority, says he cannot understand a word of it any more than if it had been written in Sanscrit; fully persuaded that the fault lay with Kant, and not with himself. But his dislike of arduous thinking did not stop with philosophy. He speaks of Montesquieu with great disdain; pronounces him to be specious, but obscure as an oracle, and shallow as a Parisian coxcomb. There is no trace in Macaulay's writings or life that he was ever arrested by an intellectual difficulty of any kind. He can bombard with great force of logic and rhetoric an enemy's position; but his mind never seems to have suggested to him problems of its own. In reading him we glide along the smoothest surface, we are hurried from picture to picture, but we never meet with a thoughtful pause which makes us consider with closed eyes what the conclusion may well be. Strange to say, he more nearly approaches discussion of principles in his speeches than in other portions of his works; but a writer of less speculative force hardly exists in the language. It is not easy to see from his diaries and correspondence that he had any intellectual interests of any kind, except his taste—if that can be called an intellectual interest—for poetry and the Greek and Latin classics. His letters are, with few exceptions, mere lively gossip. He rarely discusses even politics, in which he took so large a share, with any serious heartiness.[1] He just

[1] The only even apparent exceptions to this general statement is a group of four or five letters of the year 1845, recounting Lord John Russell's abortive attempt to form a ministry; and a truly admirable letter to Mr. Ellis, narrating the scene in the House of Commons on the passing of the first Reform Bill by a majority of one. But even these letters deal chiefly with news, and hardly attempt the discussion of principles.

Perhaps the time has not yet come for a fully representative se-

gives the last news. He does not betray the slightest interest in science, or social or religious questions, except an amusing petulance at the progress of the Tractarian movement, on which he writes squibs; but otherwise he lived in almost complete isolation amid the active intellectual life of his day. He appears to have been almost wholly wanting in intellectual curiosity of any kind.

This is shown by the strange indifference with which he treated his own subject—history. He lived in an age in which some of the most important historical works that the world has ever seen were published. He was contemporary (to name only the chief) with Sismondi, De Barante, Guizot, the two Thierrys, Mignet, Michelet, in France; with Raumer, Schlosser, Niebuhr, Otfried, Müller, Gans, Neander, F. G. Bauer, Waitz, Roth, in Germany. He never mentions one of them—except Sismondi, with a sneer. The only modern historians of whom he takes notice are Ranke and Hallam—and this not with a view to considering the value of their historical work proper, but because they furnished him with a convenient armoury for his own polemical purposes. If he had had any wide, generous interest in the progress of historical knowledge, he must have shown more sympathy with men engaged in the same field of labour as himself. He professed to be a reformer of history. These men were reformers who had proclaimed, and put in practice, every principle of any value which he advocated in the *Edinburgh Review*, in his article on History, published in 1828. He lays down, not without a certain air as of a discoverer, the new method on which he conceives history should be written—that it

lection of Macaulay's best letters. He must have written, one would think, to his colleagues and others with more weight and earnestness than appears anywhere at present.

should be, not abstract and logical, but concrete, graphic, and picturesque. One might have expected that two of the most picturesque presentations of past times which literature has to show—which, when Macaulay wrote his article, had been recently published and attracted European attention—would have been at least named on such an occasion. De Barante's *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne* (published in 1824–'26) and Augustin Thierry's *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre par les Normands* (1825) had a success in the world of letters second only to Macaulay's own success some quarter of a century later with his *History of England.* Those writers were busy with the very task which he summoned historians to take in hand. Their fame was recent and prominent, one of the events of the day. He was writing on a subject from which a reference to them, one would think, could not be excluded. It is excluded, as completely as if they had never existed. How may this be explained? Did he not know their works? or did he not appreciate them? Neither alternative is welcome. His friend Hallam, when an old man, worn down with years and domestic afflictions, set him a very different example. In his supplementary volume to the *History of the Middle Ages* he shows how carefully he had made himself acquainted with all the more important historical inquiries of the Continent. But then Hallam cared for the progress of historical research: he saw that history was full of problems which required solution. He *could not* be indifferent to what other men were doing. It is to be feared that Macaulay cared for little beside his own success as an historical artist.

The most important reform in historical studies ever made has been the application of a critical method to the study of the past; in other words, the application of as

much of scientific carefulness and precision as the subject allows. This revolution—for it is nothing less—had already begun in Macaulay's youth; and during his lifetime it had won notable victories in almost every field of historical inquiry. He not only did nothing for historical criticism, he does not seem to have been aware of its existence. He took as little notice of the labours of his countrymen, Palgrave, Dr. Guest, Kemble, as he did of the labours of foreigners. He investigated no obscure questions, cleared up no difficulties, reversed the opinion of scholars upon no important point. The following passage in a letter to his friend Ellis is characteristic: "While I was reading the earlier books (of Livy) I went again through Niebuhr; and I am sorry to say that, having always been a little sceptical about his merits, I am now a confirmed unbeliever"—a judgment which throws more light on Macaulay's own merits than on Niebuhr's.

The want of ethical depth is at least as striking. He looks away from moral problems even more resolutely than from intellectual problems. He never has anything to say on the deeper aspects and relations of life; and it would not be easy to quote a sentence from either his published works or private letters which shows insight or meditation on love, or marriage, or friendship, or the education of children, on religious faith or doubt. We find no trace in him of a "wise spirit," which has had practical experience of the solemn realities and truths of existence. His learning is confined to book-lore: he is not well read in the human heart, and still less in the human spirit. His unspirituality is complete; we never catch "a glimpse of the far land" through all his brilliant narratives; never, in his numerous portraits, comes

a line of moral suggestiveness, showing an eye for the deeper springs of character, the finer shades of motive. His inability to criticise works of poetry and fiction extended to their chief subject—the human heart; and it may be noticed that the remarkable interest he often awakens in a story which he tells so admirably, is nearly always the interest of adventure, never the interest of psychological analysis. Events and outward actions are told with incomparable clearness and vigour—but a thick curtain hangs before the inward theatre of the mind, which is never revealed on his stage. He had a favourite theory, on which he often insisted, that children were the only true poets; and this because of the vividness of their impressions: "No man, whatever his sensibility may be, is ever affected by Hamlet, or Lear, as a little girl is affected by the story of poor little Red Riding-hood"—as if the *force* of the impression were everything, and its *character* nothing. By this rule, wax-work should be finer art than the best sculpture in stone. The impressiveness of remote suggestive association by which high art touches the deepest chords of feeling Macaulay, apparently, did not recognize. He had no ear for the finer harmonies of the inner life.

The truth is that he almost wholly lacked the stronger passions. A sweet, affectionate tenderness for friends and relations was the deepest emotion he knew. This, coupled with his unselfishness, made him a most winning character to those near him, as it certainly filled his life with placid content and happiness. But there is no evidence of strong feeling in his story. I cannot readily believe the report that he was ever at one time a good hater. He had his tempers, of course, like other men; but what sign is there of any fervent heat, or lasting

mood of passion? Even in politics—the side on which he was most susceptible of strong feeling—he soon became calm, reasonable, gentle — like the good, upright, amiable man he was. Consider his prudence. He never took a hasty or unwise step in his life. His judgment was never misled in matters of conduct for a single moment. He walked in the honourable path he had chosen with a certainty as unerring as if Minerva had been present at his side. He never seems to have had occasion either to yield to, or to resist, a strong temptation. He was never in love. Ambition never got possession of his mind. We cannot imagine him doing anything wrong, or even indecorous: an elopement, a duel, an esclandre of any kind, cannot be associated even in imagination with his name. He was as blameless as Telemachus—

> "Centred in the sphere
> Of common duties, decent not to fail
> In offices of tenderness, and pay
> Meet adoration to the household gods"—

of spotless respectability. He is not to be blamed, but very much envied, for such a constitution of mind. But this is not the stuff of which great writers who stir men's hearts are made. He makes us esteem him so much that we can do little more; he cannot provoke our love, pity, or passionate sympathy. There is no romance, pathos, or ideality in his life or his writings. We never leave him conscious that we have been raised into a higher tone of feeling, chastened and subdued into humility, courage, and sacrifice. He never makes us feel "what shadows we are and what shadows we pursue." How should he? His own view of life was essentially flat and prosaic. Not an aspiration for the future; no noble

unrest and discontent with the present; no sympathetic tenderness for the past. He resembled Rubens in more ways than one.

"No phenomenon in the human mind," says Mr. Ruskin, "is more extraordinary than the junction of this cold, worldly temper with great rectitude of principle and tranquil kindness of heart. Rubens was an honourable and entirely well-intentioned man, earnestly industrious, simple and temperate in habits of life, high-bred, learned, and discreet; his affection for his mother was great; his generosity to contemporary artists unfailing. He is a healthy, worthy, kind-hearted, courtly-phrased—animal, without any clearly perceptible traces of a soul, except when he paints his children."[1]

Macaulay had no children of his own to paint; but no man was ever fonder of children.

"He was, beyond all comparison, the best of playfellows; unrivalled in the invention of games, and never wearied of repeating them. He had an inexhaustible repertory of small dramas for the benefit of his nieces, in which he sustained an endless number of parts. . . . There was one never-failing game, of building up a den with newspapers behind the sofa, and of enacting robbers and tigers —the children shrieking with terror, but always fascinated, and begging him to begin again."[2]

He had complete sympathy with children, and knew the way to their hearts better than to those of their seniors. Once he bought a superb sheet of paper for a guinea, on which to write a valentine to his little niece Alice. He notes in his diary on the 14th of February:

"At three . . . came the children. Alice was in perfect raptures over her valentine. She begged quite pathetically to be told the truth about it. When we were alone together she said, 'I am going to be very serious.' Down she fell before me on her knees, and lifted up her hands: 'Dear uncle, do tell the truth to your little girl. Did you send the valentine?' I did not choose to tell a real lie to a child, even about such a trifle, and so I owned it."

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[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. v. part 9. [2] *Trevelyan*, vol. ii. cap. ii.

A charming little scene, showing Macaulay's two best sides, tenderness and rectitude. But again: to distress, or its artful counterfeit, he was always pitiful and generous. In his journal he writes: "*December* 27.—Disagreeable weather, and disagreeable news. —— is in difficulty again. I sent 50*l.*, and shall send the same to ——, who does not ask it. But I cannot help being vexed. All the fruits of my book have for this year been swallowed up. It will be all that I can do to make both ends meet without breaking in upon capital." Leigh Hunt enclosed in a begging letter a criticism on the *Roman Lays*, lamenting that they wanted the true poetical aroma which breathes from Spenser's *Faëry Queen.* Macaulay, who had none of an author's vanity, was "much pleased" with this sincerity.

Is there not reason to doubt whether a natural predisposition to the cardinal virtues is the best outfit for the prophet, the artist, or even the preacher? Saints from of old have been more readily made out of publicans and sinners than out of Pharisees who pay tithes of all they possess. The artist, the writer, and even the philosopher equally need passion to do great work; and genuine passion is ever apt to be unruly, though by stronger men eventually subdued. "Coldness and want of passion in a picture are not signs of its accuracy, but of the paucity of its statements."[1] "Pour faire de bons vers, il faut avoir le diable au corps," said Voltaire. Macaulay had far too little of the "diable au corps" to make him a writer of impressive individuality and real power. The extent of his fame is out of all proportion to its depth. Except a certain influence on the style of journalism, which threatens to be transient, he has left little mark on his age. Out of

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. i.

his millions of readers there has scarcely come one genuine disciple.

By a change of taste as remarkable as any in literature his style, which was universally admired, is now very freely decried — perhaps more than justice requires. It cannot be denied that it was a new style: all contemporaries, headed by Jeffrey, agreed upon that point. Real novelty of style is generally a safe test of originality of mind and character. With Macaulay the test does not extend so far. Still, his style is perhaps the most original thing about him. Its peculiarity is the skill with which he has imparted to written language a large portion of the swing and rush of spoken oratory. He can be read with a good deal of the pleasurable excitement which numbers of people feel in listening to facile and voluble discourse. As a rule, copious and fluent oratory makes very bad reading; but Macaulay had the secret of transposing his thoughts from the language of spoken discourse, which seems their proper vehicle, to the language of written prose, without loss of effect. To no one talent, perhaps, does he owe so much of his reputation. The more refined and delicate literary styles are unpopular in proportion to their excellence; their harmonies and intervals, fascinating to the cultivated ear, are not only lost on but somewhat offensive to the multitude. For one hearer thrilled by a sonata or a fugue a thousand are delighted by what are sometimes called the spirit-stirring strains of *Rule, Britannia.* At an early date Macaulay gauged the popular taste. In 1830 he wrote to Macvey Napier complaining that some of the "most pointed and ornamental sentences" in an article had been omitted. "Probably," he continues, "in estimating the real value of any tinsel which I may put upon my articles, you and I should not materially differ. But it is not by

his own taste, but by the taste of the fish, that the angler is determined in his choice of bait." It would be unfair to dwell on such a remark in a private letter, if it stood alone. But all his practice during thirty years was in unison with the principle here laid down. Eschewing high thought on the one hand, and deep feeling on the other, he marched down a middle road of resonant commonplace, quite certain that where

> "Bang, whang, whang, goes the drum,
> And tootle-tee-tootle the fife,"

the densest crowd, marching in time, will follow the music. Still, it is the air rather than the instrument which makes some persons inclined to stop their ears. It is quite true that the measures of Macaulay's prose "are emphatically the measures of spoken deliverance;" but the spoken deliverance is of the Bar, the hustings, or the House of Commons. The want of benignity, the hard and scolding precision, with which he has been justly reproached, are due rather to the matter and substance than to the form of his speech. His tone of sentiment is such as would lose nothing by being uttered in a loud voice at a public meeting, and he is, indeed, far from reaching the highest notes of solemn elevation and simple pathos with which such an audience inspires some orators. But neither in public nor in private had Macaulay any gift for expressing either tender or lofty emotion. His letters are singularly wanting in effusion and expansiveness, even when addressed to friends and relatives for whom we know he had warm affection. But his love took the form of solid matter-of-fact kindness, not of a sympathy in delicate unison with another spirit with whom an interchange of sentiment is a need of existence. He seems to have been

one of those thoroughly good-hearted, good-natured persons who are wanting in tact, delicacy, and sensitiveness.[1] A certain coarseness of fibre is unmistakable. Nothing else will account for the "mean and ignoble association" of ideas, which he often seems rather to seek than avoid. He prefers comparisons which, by their ungraduated, unsoftened abruptness, produce a shock on nerves less robust than his own. "The victuallers soon found out with whom they had to deal, and sent down to the fleet casks of meat which dogs would not touch, and barrels of beer which smelt worse than bilge-water." Nothing is gained by such crudity of language; and truth is sacrificed, if that is a consideration. Dogs have no objection to tainted meat, and nothing can smell worse than bilge-water. "For our part, if we are forced to make our choice between the first shoemaker and the author of the three

[1] He was benevolent, but unsympathetic; he cared not for the beauty of nature, he detested dogs, and, except a narrow group of relations and friends, he cared not for men. One of the least pleasant passages in his biography is a scene he had with an Italian custom-house officer, who asked to be allowed a seat in his carriage from Velletri to Mola. Macaulay refused. Of this there is nothing to be said; the man may easily have been an undesirable companion. But the comment on the incident is wanting in the right tone: "I gave him three crowns not to plague by searching my baggage. . . . He pocketed the three crowns, but looked very dark and sullen at my refusal to accept his company. Precious fellow! to think that a public functionary to whom a little silver is a bribe, is fit company for an English gentleman." Narrow and unintelligent. In mere knowledge Macaulay could certainly have derived much more from the man than the latter from Macaulay. But he had little curiosity or interest in the minds of others. It will be remembered in what isolation he spent his time on the voyage to India: "Except at meals, I hardly exchanged a word with any human being." One cannot imagine Socrates or Johnson acting thus.

books on Anger, we pronounce for the shoemaker;" and one may add, you are certain to gain the gallery's applause by so doing. "To the seared consciences of Shaftesbury and Buckingham the death of an innocent man gave no more uneasiness than the death of a partridge." "A husband would be justly derided who should bear from a wife of exalted rank and spotless virtue half the insolence which the King of England bore from concubines who, while they owed everything to his bounty, caressed his courtiers almost before his face." Sentences like these, in which the needless emphasis of the words shows up the more plainly the deficient dignity and weight of thought, are of frequent occurrence, and deprive Macaulay's prose of the high quality of distinction. His comparison of Montesquieu with the learned pig and musical infant is in the same style. But perhaps the most striking instance of his tendency to a low-pitched strain of allusion is to be found in his journal, on the occasion of his visit to Dumbarton Castle in the last year of his life: "I remember my first visit to Dumbarton, and the old minister who insisted on our eating a bit of cake with him, and said a grace over it which might have been prologue to a dinner at the Fishmongers' Company or the Grocers' Company." The notion that the size and sumptuousness of a feast are to determine the length and fervour of the thanksgiving is one which one hardly expects to find outside of the Common Council, if even it is to be met with there. Macaulay's utter inability to comprehend piety of mind is one of the most singular traits in his character, considering his antecedents.

Macaulay's style, apart from its content, presents one or two interesting problems which one would like to solve. An able critic has noticed the singular fact that, though he seems to take pains to be pleonastic and re-

dundant, he is nevertheless invariably lively.[1] His variations of one tune do not weary, as one might expect. In the same way, the oratorical swing and rapidity which he undoubtedly possesses do not appear easy to reconcile with his short sentences and the mechanically regular stroke of his periods. His paragraphs are often built up by a succession of tiers, one over the other; they do not seem to grow from a central root of thought or sentiment. Sentences not exceeding a line in average length, reduced to their lowest terms of subject, predicate, and copula, are held together only by the art of the typographer. "The people of Gloucester rose, and delivered Lovelace from confinement. An irregular army soon gathered around him. Some of his horsemen had only halters for bridles. Many of his infantry had only clubs for weapons." The monotony of rhythm is sometimes reenforced by the monotony of phrase, sentence after sentence beginning with the same words; as, for instance, this conclusion of the *Essay on Lord Holland:*

"The time is coming when, perhaps, a few old men, the last survivors of our generation, will in vain seek, amidst new streets, and squares, and railway-stations, for the sight of that dwelling which was in their youth the favourite resort of wits and beauties—of painters and poets—of scholars, philosophers, and statesmen. *They will then remember*, with strange tenderness, many objects once familiar to them—the avenue and the terrace, the busts and the paintings; the carving, the grotesque gilding, and the enigmatic mottoes. With peculiar fondness *they will recall* that venerable chamber, in which all the antique gravity of a college library was so singularly blended with all that female grace and wit could devise to embellish a drawing-room. *They will recollect*, not unmoved, those shelves loaded with the varied learning of many lands and many ages; those portraits in which were preserved the features of the best and wisest

[1] *Hours in a Library*, by L. Stephen, 3rd series.

Englishmen of two generations. *They will recollect* how many men who have guided the politics of Europe—who have moved great assemblies by reason and eloquence—who have put life into bronze and canvas, or who have left to posterity things so written as it shall not willingly let them die—were there mixed with all that was loveliest and gayest in the society of the most splendid of capitals. *They will remember* the singular character which belonged to that circle in which every talent and accomplishment, every art and science, had its place. *They will remember* how the last debate was discussed in one corner, and the last comedy of Scribe in another; while Wilkie gazed with modest admiration on Reynolds's Baretti; while Mackintosh turned over Thomas Aquinas to verify a quotation; while Talleyrand related his conversations with Barras at the Luxemburg, or his rides with Lannes over the field of Austerlitz. *They will remember*, above all, the grace—and the kindness, far more admirable than grace—with which the princely hospitality of that ancient mansion was dispensed. *They will remember* the venerable and benignant countenance and the cordial voice of him who bade them welcome. *They will remember* that temper which years of pain, of sickness, of lameness, of confinement, seemed only to make sweeter and sweeter; and that frank politeness, which at once relieved all the embarrassment of the youngest and most timid writer or artist who found himself for the first time among ambassadors and earls. *They will remember* that constant flow of conversation, so natural, so animated, so various, so rich with observation and anecdote; that wit which never gave a wound; that exquisite mimicry which ennobled, instead of degrading, that goodness of heart which appeared in every look and accent, and gave additional value to every talent and acquirement. *They will remember*, too, that he whose name they hold in reverence was not less distinguished by the inflexible uprightness of his political conduct than by his loving disposition and winning manners. *They will remember* that in the last lines which he traced he expressed his joy that he had done nothing unworthy of the friend of Fox and Grey; and they will have reason to feel similar joy, if, in looking back on many troubled years, they cannot accuse themselves of having done anything unworthy of men who were distinguished by the friendship of Lord Holland."

If the light of nature and an ordinary ear were not

sufficient to warn a writer against such repetition, Macaulay, who had read his Aristotle and Quinctilian, might have been expected to know better. "The qualities and artifices of style which tell in declamation, for which they were intended, when divested of this aid do not fulfil their proper function; as, for instance, asyndeta and the reiteration of the same word; and though the orators employ them in their debates, as adapted to delivery, *in the written style they appear silly, and are justly reprobated.*"[1] Indeed, Macaulay never quite overcame a tendency to abuse this common and useful rhetorical figure in an order of composition for which it is unfit. It is to be found in the first page of his *History*, and is so common in his *Essays*, that their style is very often identical with that of his speeches.

The art by which Macaulay has caused these various blemishes not only to be condoned, but to be entirely unperceived, by the majority of readers is derived from the imaginative power and splendour of his larger tableaux. The sentences may be aggregates of atoms, but the whole is confluent, and marked by masterly unity. Style may be considered from more than one aspect. We may consider it from the point of view of the grammarian or professor of rhetoric, with reference mainly to the choice of words, the propriety of phrase, the rhythm of sentence. Or we may consider it from the higher stand-point—the general effect and impressiveness of the whole composition; the pervading power, lucidity, and coherence, which make a book attractive to read and easy to master. In the former class of qualities Macaulay leaves much to be desired. In the latter he has not many superiors. Artless, and almost clumsy as he is in build-

[1] Cope's *Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric*, p. 326.

ing a sentence, into which he is without the skill to weave, as some moderns do,

"Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished sigh on sigh,"

in building a chapter, an article, or a book he has a grand and easy power which ought "to bring the sweat into the brow" of some who hold him cheap. His short sentences, when looked at by themselves so isolated and thin, are the lines of a fine engraving all converging to produce one well-considered artistic effect—an effect in which neither deep thought nor high feeling has a share, but still one so brilliant and striking that the criticism which overlooks it may justly be accused of blindness.

CHAPTER III.

THE "ESSAYS."

We sometimes hear Macaulay's *Essays* preferred to his *History*, not only as more popular, but as showing more genius and power. Although this opinion could hardly be held by any serious critic, it contains enough truth to make its existence intelligible. The *Essays* have qualities of variety, freedom, and, above all, brevity, which the *History* is necessarily without, but which are very taking qualities with the readers whom Macaulay chiefly addresses. A long-sustained work devoted to the history of one country in one period, however lively it may be made, demands a heavier tax on the attention than many are able to pay. The large and ever-growing class who read, not for knowledge but for amusement, as an innocent mode of killing time, soon become weary of one subject carried on through several volumes. Their weak mental appetite needs stimulating by a frequent change of diet. Length is the one thing they fear and most dislike. To take up the same work day after day oppresses them with the sense of a task, and they promptly conceive an ill-will to the author for not keeping pace with their changes of mood. Even the highest works of poetical genius—the *Faëry Queen* and *Paradise Lost*—are said to be comparatively neglected, simply on account

of their volume, which alarms the indolence of readers. And it may well be doubted whether even Shakspeare does not owe a great deal of his popularity with the reading public to the fact that plays are necessarily short, and can be read through in a short time.

To readers of this temper—and they probably are a vast majority—essays offer the very thing they are in search of. No strain on the attention, frequent change of subject, a happy medium between undue length and undue brevity, are qualities exactly suited to their taste. This alone might well be the sole or chief reason why Macaulay's *Essays* should be by some preferred to his *History*. But this is probably not the only reason. The *Essays have* some merits which the *History* lacks. They were all written in the vigour of life, before his mind was saddened, if not enfeebled, by serious ill-health. They were short enough to be struck off at a heat, and many, we know, were written with extreme rapidity. They consequently have the attractive quality of exuberant vigour, high spirits, and conscious strength which delights in exercise and rapid motion for their own sake. A sense of weariness in the writer, however much it may be concealed by art, is almost sure to be felt by the reader sympathetically. Of this drawback few authors ever knew less than Macaulay up to the time of his illness. His prompt and full command of his faculties made, as he said, composition nothing but a pleasure to him. No man ever worshipped a more bountiful muse. He had no labour pains, no dark wrestlings with thoughts which he could not throw, conquered and subdued, with vigorous strength down on paper. His *Essays*, therefore, in many ways much less finished and careful, have often more *verve* than the *History*. Like the first flight of the falcon, they show a store of unsubdued

energy, which, so far from fearing fatigue, rather seeks it, and does not readily find it.

The originality of form and treatment which Macaulay gave to the historical essay has not, perhaps, received due recognition. Without having invented it, he so greatly expanded and improved it that he deserves nearly as much credit as if he had. He did for the historical essay what Haydn did for the sonata, and Watt for the steam-engine: he found it rudimentary and unimportant, and left it complete and a thing of power. Before his time there was the ponderous history — generally in quarto — and there was the antiquarian dissertation. There was also the historical review, containing alternate pages of extract and comment—generally rather dull and gritty. But the historical essay as he conceived it, and with the prompt inspiration of a real discoverer immediately put into practical shape, was as good as unknown before him. To take a bright period or personage of history, to frame it in a firm outline, to conceive it at once in article-size, and then to fill in this limited canvas with sparkling anecdote, telling bits of colour, and facts all fused together by a real genius for narrative, was the sort of genre-painting which Macaulay applied to history. We have only to turn to the back numbers of the *Edinburgh Review* to perceive how his articles gleam in those old pages of "gray paper and blunt type." And to this day his *Essays* remain the best of their class, not only in England but in Europe. Slight, or even trivial, in the field of historical erudition and critical inquiry, they are masterpieces, if regarded in the light of great popular cartoons on subjects taken from modern history. They are painted, indeed, with such freedom, vividness, and power, that they may be said to enjoy a sort of tacit monopoly of the periods and characters to which

they refer, in the estimation of the general public. How many persons, outside the class of professed students, know much of Lord Chatham, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, Walpole, Pulteney, Carteret, and many more, beyond what they learn from the pages of Macaulay? His friend Lord Stanhope is a much more safe, steady, and trustworthy guide through the eighteenth century. But for one reader who will sit down to the accurate, conscientious, ill-written *History of England* by Lord Stanhope, a hundred will read, and read again, the brilliant *Essays*. Any portion of English history which Macaulay has travelled over—the remark applies much less to his treatment of foreign subjects—is found to be moulded into a form which the average Englishman at once enjoys and understands. He did, it has been truly said, in a small way, and in solid prose, the same thing for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that Shakspeare did in a poetical way for the fifteenth century. The first Duke of Marlborough had the candour to acknowledge that all he knew of the history of England he derived from Shakspeare's historical plays. We may surmise that many who would not readily confess it are equally indebted to Macaulay. He succeeded in achieving the object which he always professed to aim at—making history attractive and interesting—to a degree never attained before. This is either a merit or a fault, according to the point of view from which we regard it; but from every point of view it was no common feat.

It will be convenient to classify the *Essays* in the following groups, with the object of giving as much unity as possible to a subject necessarily wanting it:

(1.) English history. (3.) Controversial.
(2.) Foreign history. (4.) Critical and miscellaneous.

English History Group.[1] — If the articles composing this group are arranged with reference to the chronology of the periods they treat of, they form a fairly complete survey of English history from the time of Elizabeth to the later years of the reign of George III. This was the portion of our history to which Macaulay had devoted most time and attention. The period previous to the Reformation he had studied with much less care. His acquaintance with the Middle Age generally may without injustice be pronounced slight; and though well informed as to the history of the Continent, his knowledge of it, as we shall have occasion to see, was not so accurate or deep. But his knowledge of English history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was minute, extensive, and profound. These twelve essays may be regarded as preliminary studies, by which he preluded and prepared himself for his great work. Nothing can be more obvious than that the historical student was guided in his choice of this field by the sympathies and opinions of the active politician. He was a Whig, with ardent and disinterested conviction, when to be a Whig was to be a friend of liberty and progress in the most rational and practical form. During the long predominance of Tory rule and sentiment the heroic age of England had been defaced, and perverted into a hideous and malignant caricature. A vigorous vindication of English liberty in the past allied itself naturally, in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*, with the active polemics there carried on in favour of the same liberty in the present. It was not as an antiquarian that Macaulay insisted upon a new hearing of the great cause in which Charles I., Strafford, and Laud

[1] Burleigh, Hallam, Hampden, Milton, Temple, Mackintosh, Walpole, Pitt-Chatham, Clive, Warren Hastings.

appeared on the one side, against Hampden, Pym, and Cromwell on the other, but as the active member of Parliament, who supported the first Reform Bill with five powerful speeches in one year. He attacked Toryism indirectly, by writing on the great Liberal leaders of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the Reformers attacked Catholicism by writing on the primitive discipline and doctrine of the Early Church. When writing of the Long Parliament or the Revolution an implied reference is always visible to the Whigs and Tories of his own day. Sometimes the reference to contemporary politics is open and direct, as when, in the midst of his discussion of the conduct of the Parliamentary leaders headed by Hampden, he makes a sudden and telling allusion to the contemporary condition of Spain under Ferdinand VII. (*Memorials of Hampden*).

The party character of Macaulay's *Essays* on English history is neither to be denied nor deplored. That he rendered a great political service to the cause of Liberalism cannot be doubted, and every deduction that may be made from the merit of the historian must be set down to the account of the publicist. Scientific history was never his object, but the propagation of sound constitutional doctrine was very much so. It has been said with truth that, in all he ever wrote, a defence open or implied of Whig principles may be perceived. That this connexion of his work with the ephemeral politics of the day will injure its permanent value is very obvious; but not, perhaps, to the extent that is sometimes supposed.

It is one of the affectations of the hour to use the term Whig as a convenient vehicle of polite vituperation. A man who can now with any accuracy be called a genuine old Whig is by some persons considered to be beyond the

pale of toleration. No further anathema is needed; the deadliest slur has been cast on his intellect and character in one word. A hatred of pure reason, and a comfortable middle-class creed on social matters, are the two most offensive characteristics generally ascribed to the Whig. They would be offensive enough if Whiggism was, or pretended to be, a philosophical theory of politics. But in Macaulay's day Whiggism was not a philosophy, but a scheme of practical expediency—a working policy which had a chance of being realized. What, after all, is the essence of Whiggism as distinct from its accidents? Is it not this: illogical but practical compromise between two extremes which are logical but not at all practical? It is no isolated phenomenon confined to certain periods of English history, but one of the most general to be found, not only in politics but in religion, and even philosophy. Wherever men are engaged in steering between the opposite shoals of extreme parties with a view to practical result, there Whiggism exists in reality if not in name. Bossuet was a Whig in the Catholic Church, and Pascal was a Whig in the Gallican Church. Reid, Brown, and Coleridge, even Kant, were Whigs in philosophy. Whiggism is always the scorn of thorough-going men and rigorous logicians; is ever stigmatized as a bending of the knee to Baal. But thorough-going men, actuated by thorough-going logic, do not often, or for long, remain directors of public affairs. No man was ever less of a philosopher, or more of a politician, than Macaulay. He had an eye to business, not to abstract truth. The present age, which sees only the writer, and has nearly forgotten the politician, is easily tempted to judge him by a standard to which he did not and could not conform. His own serene unconsciousness of his want of speculative power

is at once amusing and irritating. But the point to be remembered is, that when we have written Whig after his name, and declared they are convertible terms, all is not said and done, and that, for purposes of criticism, the process is too simple and summary to be of much value. We have to consider the object at which he aimed, not to complain of his failure to hit a mark which he never thought of. A man engaged in paving the best *via media* that he can find between ultra opinions on opposite sides is always exposed to taunt. Macaulay was reviled by Chartists and Churchmen, and he himself disliked high Tories and philosophical Radicals in equal measure. When the object is to gain votes for practical measures the beauties of pure reason are apt to be overlooked. The great maxim of prudence on these occasions is, "not to go too far" in any direction. Logic and consistency are readily sacrificed for the sake of union in action. Closet philosophers naturally resent this as very mean and commonplace. But that is because they are closet philosophers.

The party bias of the *Essays*, it is said, deprives them of all value as history. And this is partly true. But let us be just even to party historians. When it is claimed that the historian must above all things be impartial, what is meant by the word? Is it demanded that the writer on a past age is to take no side—to have no preference, either for persons whom he considers virtuous, or for principles which he considers just; and, again, is he to have no reprobation for the contraries to these, which he considers unjust and pernicious? If this is meant by impartiality, the answer is, that on these lines history cannot be, and never has been, written. Such is the solidarity of human nature that it refuses to regard the just and the unjust

with equal favour in the past any more than in the present. Of course the question is always reserved as to which party in the suit these epithets respectively apply. Erroneous judgments have been passed in the court of history, as they are passed in courts of law. But that is no argument for maintaining that both sides are entitled to the same favour and good-will. Both sides are entitled to justice, and justice may require the utmost severity of condemnation of one of the parties. No judge at the end of a criminal trial was ever able to conceal the side to which he inclined in his summing up. His business is not to abstain from having an opinion—which a man of intelligence could hardly do—but to point to the decisive evidence on either side, and, holding up the scales, to let the lighter kick the beam in the eyes of all men. If this is partiality, it is such as no honest man would like to be without. So the historian: his duty is to be impartial in weighing evidence; but that being done, to declare with unmistakable clearness which side has been found wanting. As he is human, he is exposed to error, but for that there is no remedy. Miscarriages of justice must and will occur. They must be redressed when discovered. And, fortunately, errors of this kind are of less grave practical consequence in the courts of history than in the courts of law. Yet we submit to the latter, being unable to help ourselves. It is vain to hope that this subjective bias can ever be removed from the mind of a human judge. And it is not desirable to remove it. What is worthy of blame is the suppression or garbling of evidence—not holding really true scales. The notion that such bias is necessarily connected with the party-spirit of modern times, and shown only in reference to modern periods of history, is quite without foundation. The history of Greece and

Rome is subject to it as much as the history of Modern Europe. Mitford was biassed in favour of the oligarchies of Greece. Grote was equally biassed in favour of the democracies. So far each was within his right. But if it appears that either was unfair in collecting and sifting evidence, and showed anxiety to win a verdict by his misrepresentation of it, then he is to be condemned as an unjust judge—or, rather, he is an advocate who has usurped a judge's functions and merits degradation. Mitford has been deposed, and justly so, in the opinion of competent men. Grote, on the whole, has been maintained by the same opinion.

Further, if we grant that historians are exposed to peculiar temptations to slide from the position of judge to that of advocate—if they are honest advocates, maintaining the cause they believe to be just, by honourable means, they need not fear much censure from equitable men. The final judge, after all, is public opinion—not of a day, or a year, or even of a century, but of ages. Perhaps it can never be absolutely obtained. But in the mean while nothing is more serviceable to the cause of truth than that every important party to an historical suit should be represented by the ablest advocate that can be found, so long as he is honest—that is, not only refrains from telling lies, but from suppressing truth. Every open-minded inquirer must be glad to hear all that can be said in favour of a given side; nay, to hear most of all what can be said in favour of the side to which he himself does not belong. It is vastly more comforting to hear Dr. Lingard condemn James II. of injustice, infatuation, arbitrary and impotent policy, than to hear the most eloquent indictments of the same monarch from those who hold Whig opinions. When Hume condemns Charles I. for the arrest of the five Mem-

bers, we feel quite sure that on that point at least nothing can be said, or such an able, not to say unscrupulous, advocate would not have omitted it. In time the heats of party zeal are gradually cooled; questions of disputed fact are reduced to narrow issues.. The motives and characters of the most prominent actors are at last weighed by impartial men, who have no interest stronger in the matter than the discovery of truth. Then we have reached the critical stage of history.

Macaulay was far from having reached this higher stage. But as a writer of party history he stands high. If his mind was uncritical, his temper was generally fair. No one would expect the party against whom he appeared—the sympathizers with high prerogative as against the sympathizers with liberty—to admit this. But his Whig version of our history has been, on the whole, accepted by a wide public, with whom political partisanship is not a strong passion. His frank avowal of his sympathies can be a defect only in the eyes of the unintelligent, or the bigoted who will brook no contradiction. His bias is open and above-board; he lays his proofs before you, which you may accept or refuse, but in a candid way—very different from the sly, subtle disingenuousness of Hume. At the same time it must be admitted that the common fate of controversialists is already beginning to overtake Macaulay. His point of view is already somewhat out of date. We are always repelled, or disdainfully amused, by the heats of a remote controversy which does not touch our passions or interests. It seems absurd to be so angry with people who lived so long ago, and who clearly never did us any harm. The *suave mari magno* feeling is a little ungenerous, but very natural and common. A critic complains that Macaulay "mauls poor James II." as he did the Tories

of 1832. It no doubt requires an historical imagination of some liveliness to make us perceive that pity is wasted on a sovereign whose wickedness was only defeated by his folly. We are in no danger of being tried and browbeaten by Jeffreys or hanged by Colonel Kirke. Such are the gratitude and the "little short memories" of mankind. Nevertheless, it is a true instinct which warns us against transferring the passions of the present to the remote past. The passions should be quiet, only the critical reason should be active, surveying the concluded story with calm width, and telling us what it all amounted to.

It will not be expected that all Macaulay's *Essays* should be passed in review in a short work of this kind. We can only find space for a few words on the most memorable, omitting the less famous as we pass over the relatively unimportant pictures in a gallery.

The *Essays*, as might well be supposed, are unequal in merit. One of the weakest is that which appears first on the list given a few pages back, *Burleigh and his Times.* It is at once thin and trenchant, and would be wholly undeserving of notice did it not contain a faulty historical view, which Macaulay never laid aside to the end of his life. The error consists in fastening the odium of persecution and tolerance as a peculiar reproach on the Government of Burleigh and Elizabeth. "What can be said in defence of a ruler who is at once indifferent and intolerant?" he asks. If the Queen had only had the virtue and enlightenment of More and L'Hospital, the whole of our history for the last two hundred and fifty years would have worn another colour. "She had the happiest opportunity ever vouchsafed to any sovereign of establishing perfect freedom of conscience throughout her dominions, without danger to her Government, without scandal to

any large party among her subjects." Any addition to the enlightenment and patience of the capricious vixen who then ruled England would, no doubt, have been a great boon to her subjects and ministers, but it is supposing extraordinary efficacy even in the virtue of Queen Elizabeth to imagine that it could have influenced our history for two hundred and fifty years after her death. But Macaulay must have known that uniformity in religion was considered in the sixteenth century an indispensable condition of stable civil government, and that by all parties and sects. "Persecution for religious heterodoxy in all its degrees was in the sixteenth century the principle, as well as the practice, of every church. It was held inconsistent with the sovereignty of the magistrate to permit any religion but his own; inconsistent with his duty to suffer any but the true."[1] Bacon said: "It is certain that heresies and schisms are of all others the greatest scandals, yea, more than corruption of manners."[2] It is against all equity to blame one or two individuals for a universal error. Yet Macaulay constantly dwells on the persecutions of Elizabeth's reign, as if they were marked by peculiar short-sightedness and malignity. He does it in the essay on *Hallam*, and in the first chapter of the *History*, though in less peremptory language. There can be no doubt that he knew the facts perfectly well. But, as often happened with him, knowledge did not mount up into luminous general views. Persecution had long been proved to be bad; Elizabeth persecuted; therefore she was to be blamed. The temper of the whole age is not taken into the account.

The article on *Hallam's Constitutional History* is one

[1] Hallam's *Literature of Europe*, vol. ii. p. 343.

[2] Essay iii.

of the best. It is one of the most strenuous argumentative pieces Macaulay ever wrote. Fiercely polemical in its assault on the Tory version of English history, it may be regarded as a compendium of Whig principles *in usum populi*. Indeed, its opinions are somewhat more than Whig. It belongs to that small group of articles which were written before the author was plunged in the daily strife of politics and ceaseless round of business (the others are those on *Milton*, *Machiavelli*, and *History*), and they show, I venture to think, a speculative reach and openness of mind which were never recovered in the active life of subsequent years. The vindication of the character of Cromwell is as spirited as it is just, and really gives the outline which Carlyle filled in many years after.

The article on the *Memorials of Hampden* is graceful and touching. The tone of pious reverence for the great Puritan champion makes it one of his most harmonious pieces. The essay on *Milton* is only remarkable for showing the early maturity of his powers, but on that ground it is very remarkable. With the article on *Sir William Temple* we enter upon a new stage of Macaulay's development as a writer and an artist. The articles he wrote for the *Edinburgh Review* after his return from India, in 1838, are markedly superior to those he wrote before leaving England. The tone is much quieter, yet the vivacity is not diminished; the composition is more careful, sustained, and even. The *Sir William Temple* was the first of the post-Indian articles, and it is one of the best he ever wrote. If one wanted to give an intelligent foreign critic a good specimen of Macaulay—a specimen in which most of his merits and fewest of his faults are collected in a small compass—one could hardly do better than give him the article on *Sir William*

Temple. The extraordinary variety of the piece, the fine colouring and judicious shading, the vivid interest, the weighty topics discussed gravely, the lighter accessories thrown in gracefully over and around the main theme, like arabesque work on a Moorish mosque, or flights of octaves and arpeggios in a sonata of Mozart, justly entitle it to a high place, not only in Macaulay's writings, but in the literature of the age. Strange to say, it does not appear to have been a favourite with the public, if we may infer as much from the fact that it has not been printed separately; yet no article deserves it better. It is a masterpiece of its kind. The article on *Mackintosh* calls for no remark. That on *Walpole* is interesting chiefly for the amusing animosity which Macaulay nourished towards him. It was most unjust. He had far too low an opinion of Walpole's intellect, which was in many ways more penetrating and thoughtful than his own. Walpole did not call Montesquieu a Parisian coxcomb, but the very moment the *Esprit des Lois* appeared pronounced it the best book that ever was written. Walpole's generous sentiments on the slave-trade, half a century in advance of public opinion on the subject, should have been appreciated by a son of Zachary Macaulay. The two articles on the first William Pitt, written at ten years' interval, show the difference between Macaulay's earlier and later manner very clearly. The first is full of dash, vigour, and interest, but in a somewhat boisterous tone of high spirits, which at times runs dangerously near to bad taste. As, for instance:

"In this perplexity Newcastle sent for Pitt, hugged him, patted him, smirked at him, wept over him, and lisped out the highest compliments and the most splendid promises. The King, who had hitherto been as sulky as

possible, would be civil to him at the *levée*," etc., etc. Nothing of this kind will be found in the second article (the last Macaulay ever wrote for the *Edinburgh Review*), but, on the contrary, great dignity and gravity, which recall the best pages of the *History*. He was, indeed, writing the *History* at this moment, and he was enjoying a literary leisure such as he had never enjoyed before. He also was losing the strongly marked characteristics of a party man, and gravitating to that central and neutral position which he occupied with regard to politics in his later years. The fact is worth alluding to, as there seems still to survive a notion that Macaulay from first to last remained a narrow and bitter Whig. Those who hold this view may consider the following passage:

"The Whig, who during three Parliaments had never given one vote against the Court, and who was ready to sell his soul for the Comptroller's staff or for the Great Wardrobe, still professed to draw his political doctrines from Locke and Milton, still worshipped the memory of Pym and Hampden, and would still, on the 30th of January, take his glass to the man in the mask and then to the man who would do it without a mask. The Tory, on the other hand, while he reviled the mild and temperate Walpole as a deadly enemy of liberty, could see nothing to reprobate in the iron tyranny of Strafford and Laud. But, whatever judgment the Whig or the Tory of that age might pronounce on transactions long past, there can be no doubt that, as respected practical questions then pending, the Tory was a reformer—and indeed an intemperate and indiscreet reformer—while the Whig was a Conservative, even to bigotry. . . . Thus, the successors of the old Cavaliers had turned demagogues; the successors of the old Roundheads had turned courtiers. Yet it was long before their mutual animosity began to abate; for it is the nature of parties to retain their original enmities far more firmly than their original principles. During many years a generation of Whigs, whom Sydney would have spurned as slaves, continued to wage deadly war with a generation of Tories whom Jeffreys would have hanged for republicans."

The Pitts, both father and son, seem to have had an unusual attraction for Macaulay, and he wrote of them with more sympathy and insight than of any other statesman except King William III. His biography of the younger Pitt is, perhaps, the most perfect thing that he has left. It is not an historical essay, but a genuine "Life," and it is impossible to overpraise either the plan or the execution. Nearly all the early faults of his rhetorical manner have disappeared; there is no eloquence, no declamation, but a lofty moral impressiveness which is very touching and noble. It was written when he saw his own death to be near; and although he had none of Johnson's "horror of the last," there is a depth and solemnity of tone in this "Life" to which he never attained before. Pitt's own stately and majestic character would seem to have chastened and elevated his style, which recalls the masculine dignity, gravity, and calm peculiar to the higher strains of Roman eloquence. The little work deserves printing by itself on "papier de Chine," in Elzevir type, by Lemerre, Quantin, or the Librairie des Bibliophiles.

Very different are the two famous Indian articles on Clive and Warren Hastings. In these we find no Attic severity of diction, but all the pomp and splendour of Asiatic eloquence. It is not unsuitable to the occasion; a somewhat gorgeous magnificence is not out of place in the East. There is no need to dwell on pieces so universally and justly popular.[1] They belong, it need not be

[1] It is vexatious to be forced to add that the historical fidelity of the fine *Essay on Warren Hastings* is in many places open to more than suspicion. A son of the Chief-justice of Bengal has shown (*Memoirs of Sir Elijah Impey*, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1840) that Macaulay has been guilty at least of very reckless statements. He

said, to his second and better manner; the rhetoric, though proud and high-stepping enough, is visibly under restraint and amenable to the curb. There was a particular reason why Macaulay was so successful in the articles on the two Pitts and the two Indian Pro-consuls. They were men whose character he could thoroughly understand and largely admire. Taken all round, his insight into men's bosoms was not deep, and was decidedly limited. Complex and involved characters, in which the good and evil were interwoven in odd and original ways, in which vulgar and obvious faults or vices concealed deeper and rarer qualities underneath, were beyond his ken. In men like Rousseau, Byron, Boswell, even Walpole, he saw little more than all the world could see — those patent breaches of conventional decorum and morality which the most innocent young person could join him in condemning. But the great civic and military qualities—resolute courage, promptitude, self-command, and firmness of purpose—he could thoroughly understand and warmly admire. His style is always animated by a warmer glow and a deeper note when he celebrates high deeds of valour or fortitude either in the council or the field. There was an heroic fibre in him, which the peaceful times in which he lived, and the peaceful occupations in which he passed his days, never adequately revealed.

Foreign History Group.[1]—Of these five articles there is

was not, one likes to think, intentionally and wittingly unfair; but he was liable to become inebriated with his own rhetoric till he lost the power of weighing evidence. The old superstitious belief in Macaulay's accuracy is a creed of the past; but one cannot help regretting that he never saw the propriety or even the necessity of either answering or admitting the grave reflections on his truthfulness made in Mr. Barwell Impey's book.

[1] Machiavelli, Mirabeau, Von Ranke, Frederic, Barère.

only one over which we can linger. The *Machiavelli* is ingenious and wide; but its main thesis—that the Italians had a monopoly of perfidy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—is untenable and almost absurd. The *Mirabeau* is sprightly, but it contains some very commonplace errors —for instance, that the death of the Duke of Burgundy was a serious loss to good government in France. As to the *Frederic*, it might pass muster before Carlyle wrote on the subject: it has little interest now. The article on Barère is a most savage philippic against one of the most odious characters in history. Whether he deserved so sumptuous an execution may be doubted. Alone remains the famous article on the *History of the Popes*, which not only bespeaks attention by reason of its subject and the point of view from which that subject is regarded, but because it is apparently considered by some persons as valuable and important in itself. It is very far indeed from being either. If the articles on Temple and Pitt show Macaulay's good side, this article on the Popes shows his less favourable side in an equal degree. It was not a subject which he was well qualified to treat, even if he had done his best and given himself fair play. Circumstances and his own temperament combined prevented him from doing either one or the other.

The real subject of the article, though nominally Ranke's book, is to ask the question, Why did Protestantism cease to spread after the end of the sixteenth century? and why did the Church of Rome recover so much of the ground that she had lost in the early years of the Reformation? The inquiry was an interesting one, and worthy of a careful answer. But the answer could only be found or given by a student who could investigate with freedom, and who was in a position to speak his mind. To write with one

eye on the paper and with the other on the susceptibilities of the religious world, was not a method that could lead to results of any value. And Macaulay comes to no result. He does not even reach a conclusion. The question with which he starts, and which is repeated again with great solemnity at the end of the article, is not answered, nor is an answer even attempted. He displays in his most elaborate manner how strange and surprising it is that the Roman Church should survive the many attacks made upon her; how singular it is that when Papists now forsake their religion they become infidels, and not Protestants; and when they forsake their infidelity, instead of stopping half way in some Protestant faith, they go back to Romanism. At the time of the Reformation, he says, this was not the case. "Whole nations then renounced Popery, without ceasing to believe in a first cause, in a future life, or the divine mission of Jesus." This he considers a "most remarkable fact," and worthy of "serious consideration." But he does not give a hint of an explanation of the fact—unless the singular preface to the historical portion of the article may be so considered.

The purpose of this introduction is to discuss whether the growth of knowledge and science has any influence in the way of promoting the rationality of men's religious opinions; and Macaulay decides that it has not. Science may increase to any amount, but that will never have the least effect on either natural or revealed religion.

"A Christian of the fifth century with a Bible was neither better nor worse situated than a Christian of the nineteenth century with a Bible — candour and natural acuteness being, of course, supposed equal. It matters not at all that the compass, printing, gunpowder, steam, gas, vaccination, and a thousand other discoveries and inventions, which were unknown in the fifth century, are familiar to the

nineteenth. None of these discoveries and inventions have the smallest bearing on the question whether man is justified by faith alone, or whether the invocation of saints is an orthodox practice. It seems to us, therefore, that we have no security for the future against the prevalence of any theological error that has prevailed in time past among Christian men."

He goes on to say that when he reflects that a man of such wisdom and virtue as Sir Thomas More believed in Transubstantiation, he is unable to see why that doctrine should not be believed by able and honest men till the end of time. No progress of science can make that doctrine more absurd than it is already, or than it ever has been. "The absurdity of the literal interpretation *was as great and as obvious in the sixteenth century as it is now.*" In fact, the human mind is given up to caprice on these matters, and obeys no ascertainable law. "No learning, no sagacity, affords a security against the greatest errors on subjects relating to the invisible world." Whether a man believes in sense or nonsense with regard to religion is merely a matter of accident. But if that is so, what is there in the least surprising that the Church of Rome has survived so many attacks and perils? why is that fact "most remarkable" and "worthy of serious consideration?" It is expressly stated that reason has nothing to do with these matters. Any old heresy may come to life again at any moment. Any nonsense may be believed by men of learning and sagacity. Then why wonder that one particular form of nonsense is believed? It is a waste of time to marvel at the effects of acknowledged chance. If, indeed, the phenomena recur with considerable regularity and persistence, we may have good reason to suspect a law. In either case Macaulay's procedure was illegitimate. Roman Catholicism is capable of rational explana-

tion, or it is not. If it is, let the inquiry into the moral, social, and intellectual causes of its origin be soberly conducted. If it is not capable of rational explanation, why pronounce its prevalence worthy of consideration and most remarkable?

But what can be said of the passage in which a Christian of the fifth century with a Bible is declared to be neither better nor worse situated than a Christian of the nineteenth century with a Bible? This is to assert that the lapse of time has no effect on the way in which men read, understand, and interpret ancient writings. With regard to any literature such a remark would be most erroneous; but with regard to the Scriptural literature—the Bible—it is erroneous to absurdity. If there is any one thing which varies from age to age more than another, it is the way in which men regard the writings of past generations, whether these be poetry, philosophy, history, or law. But the point of view from which religious writings are regarded is exposed to perturbations of exceptional violence. And yet Macaulay deliberately wrote that the lapse of fourteen hundred years had, and could have, no effect on the study of the Scriptures—that a Christian reading the Bible amid the falling ruins of the Roman Empire was in the same position as a Christian reading the Bible in prosperous England in the reign of Queen Victoria. A more inept remark was hardly ever made by a man of education. With regard to what ancient writings did Macaulay find himself neither better nor worse situated than a man of the fifth century? Did he read Plato, as Plotinus or Proclus did? Did he read Cicero, as Macrobius did? or Virgil, as Servius did? or Homer, as Eustathius did (a century or two makes no difference)? Did he even read Pope, as Johnson did, or Congreve, or Cowley, or any writer that

ever lived in an age removed from his own? But the changes of mental attitude with regard to secular writers are trivial as compared to the changes which take place with regard to religious writers. In a similar spirit, he says that the absurdity of the literal interpretation was as great and as obvious in the sixteenth century as it is now. This is tantamount to saying that what appeared obviously absurd to him was always obviously absurd to everybody. That the human mind in the course of its development has gone through great changes in its conceptions of the universe—of man's position in it—of the order of nature—seems to have been a notion which he never even remotely suspected. Did he think that the Pagan Mythology was as obviously absurd in the time of Homer as it is now? Did he find the Hindoo Mythology obviously absurd to religious Brahmins? This is the writing of a man who cannot by possibility conceive any point of view but his own.

The remainder of the article is devoted to a description of what he names the four uprisings of the human intellect against the Church of Rome. Macaulay painting a picture, and Macaulay discussing a religious or philosophical question, are two different persons. There is some very attractive and graceful scene-painting in this part of the article. The Albigensian Crusade is narrated with great spirit, brevity, and accuracy. What he calls the second rising up, in the fourteenth century, was not one at all. It was a quarrel between an ambitious king and an ambitious pope, in which the latter got the worst of it. His knowledge here is very thin: as when he says that "the secular authority, long unduly depressed, regained the ascendant with startling rapidity." What secular authority had been depressed? There had not been any

secular authority in France from the fall of the Carling Empire till the gradual establishment of the Capetian Monarchy under Philip Augustus and his successors. Feudalism had reigned supreme for three hundred years; and feudalism in France was the negation of secular authority, because it was incompatible with any general government. But we cannot dwell on this point, any more than we can on his treatment of the Reformation, which is full of small slips; as, for instance, that "the spirit of Savonarola had nothing in common with the spirit of religious Protestantism." Luther, at any rate, did not hold that view, as he republished in 1523 Savonarola's *Commentary on the Psalms.* Again, he says that Catholicism was associated in the public mind of Spain with liberty as well as victory and dominion. As regards victory and dominion the remark is true; but liberty! The reference is to the period of the Spanish conquest of Mexico by Cortez; that is to say, to the despotic reign of Charles V. We have only space to refer to the odd comparison, or rather contrast, which he draws between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, the object of which is to show that the policy of the latter "is the very masterpiece of human wisdom," whereas the policy of the Church of England has been very much the reverse. It takes him three pages to develop his idea, but it all comes to this, that the Church of Rome knows how to utilize enthusiasm, and the Church of England does not. "Place Ignatius at Oxford: he is certain to become the head of a formidable secession. Place John Wesley at Rome: he is certain to be the first general of a new society devoted to the interests and honour of the Church." Now, this sentence, and the whole argument of which it is a part, is very singular, as showing that Macaulay was often not fully master of

the knowledge which we know that he possessed. When he paints a picture his hand never shakes; his imagination for that purpose holds all the facts he requires in vivid reality before him. But when he attempts to generalize, to co-ordinate facts in a general expression, he breaks down. As in the present instance: the whole history of the Reformation, both in England and on the Continent, was there to show him that the profound wisdom he ascribed to the Church of Rome existed only in his own fancy. Greater caution in handling Luther, greater prudence with regard to Henry VIII., might, it is well known, have prevented a schism. But the case of the Jansenists was enough to show him how hasty his view was, if he had given himself time to reflect. He was well acquainted with the facts. In this very article he refers to the destruction of Port Royal. But what were the Jansenists but the Wesleyans of the Church of Rome, with a singular closeness of analogy? He reproaches the English Church with the defection of Wesley, and no doubt a great deal may be said as regards the unwisdom which allowed or caused it. But what was that compared to the treatment of the Jansenists by the Church of Rome? As a matter of fact, from the time of St. Cyran and Antony Arnauld to the time of Lammenais and Döllinger, the Church of Rome has never hesitated to take the shortest way with dissentients in her own communion, "to spue them out of her mouth," with every mark of detestation and abhorrence. On the other hand, of all long-suffering Churches, tolerant and docile of contradiction to the verge of feebleness, the Church of England is perhaps the most remarkable. And Macaulay knew this quite well.

Controversial Group.[1]—Controversy is at once the most

[1] Mill, Saddler, Southey, Gladstone.

popular and the most ephemeral form of composition. Nothing seems more important at the moment: nothing less so when the moment has passed. Of all the endless controversies of which the world has ever been full, only the fewest survive in human memory; and they do so either because they have been real turning-points in the history of thought, or because something of permanent value outside the immediate subject of contention was struck out in the conflict. Pascal's *Provincial Letters* are the supreme example of a controversial piece on which time seems to have no effect. But Pascal had advantages such as no other controversialist has ever united. First of all, he did not kill his adversaries, generally the most fatal thing for his own permanent fame that a controversialist can do. The Jesuits still exist, and are still hated by many. Those who bear ill-will to the Society find in the *Provincial Letters* the most exquisite expression of their dislike. Secondly, Pascal was the first classic prose writer of his country. On a lower, but still a very high, level stands Bentley's dissertation on *Phalaris*. Bentley did kill his adversary dead, but it was with missiles of pure gold, which the world carefully preserves. Macaulay, it need hardly be remarked, did nothing of this kind. He took his share with courage and ability in the battle for Liberal views forty and fifty years ago, and that is nearly all that can be said. He kept the position—he repelled the enemy; he did not advance and occupy new ground, and give a new aspect to the whole campaign. As he suppressed the articles on *Mill*, with a delicacy which did him honour, they need hardly be referred to. It has been well pointed out that there is a contradiction between his principles and his conduct on this occasion. "He ought by all his intellectual sympa-

thies to be a Utilitarian. Yet he abuses Utilitarianism with the utmost contempt, and has no alternative theory to suggest."[1] But coherence of thought, we have seen, was not his characteristic. The article on *Southey* is much more pleasant reading. If while admiring its vigour we miss a lightness of touch, we should remember that it was written two years before the passing of the Reform Bill, when the minds of men had become heated to a degree of fierceness. The admiration expressed for the industrial *régime* strikes a reader of the present day as oddly sentimental and impassioned. But the industrial *régime* was a very different thing in 1830 from what it is in 1882, and Macaulay was the last man to forecast the future evils of the manufacturing system. As usual, he shows his strength, not in thinking, but in drawing. The following passage has always appeared to us as one of the best in his earlier and less chastened manner:

"Part of this description might, perhaps, apply to a much greater man, Mr. Burke. But Mr. Burke assuredly possessed an understanding admirably fitted for the investigation of truth—an understanding stronger than that of any statesman, active or speculative, of the eighteenth century—stronger than everything, except his own fierce and ungovernable sensibility. Hence he generally chose his side like a fanatic, and defended it like a philosopher. His conduct, in the most important events of his life—at the time of the impeachment of Hastings, for example, and at the time of the French Revolution—seems to have been prompted by those feelings and motives which Mr. Coleridge has so happily described:

'Stormy pity, and cherish'd lure
Of pomp, and proud precipitance of soul.'

Hindostan, with its vast cities, its gorgeous pagodas, its long-descended dynasties, its stately etiquette, excited in a mind so capa-

[1] *Hours in a Library*, by Leslie Stephen, 3rd series.

cious, so imaginative, and so susceptible, the most intense interest. The peculiarities of the costume, of the manners, and of the laws, the very mystery which hung over the language and origin of the people, seized his imagination. To plead in Westminster Hall, in the name of the English people, at the bar of the English nobles, for great nations and kings separated from him by half the world, seemed to him the height of human glory. Again, it is not difficult to perceive that his hostility to the French Revolution principally arose from the vexation which he felt at having all his old political associations disturbed, at seeing the well-known boundary-marks of states obliterated, and the names and distinctions with which the history of Europe had been filled for ages, swept away. He felt like an antiquary whose shield had been scoured, or a connoisseur who found his Titian retouched. But however he came by an opinion, he had no sooner got it than he did his best to make out a legitimate title to it. His reason, like a spirit in the service of an enchanter, though spellbound, was still mighty. It did whatever work his passions and his imagination might impose. But it did that work, however arduous, with marvellous dexterity and vigour. His course was not determined by argument; but he could defend the wildest course by arguments more plausible than those by which common men support opinions which they have adopted after the fullest deliberation. Reason has scarcely ever displayed, even in those well-constituted minds of which she occupies the throne, so much power and energy as in the lowest offices of that imperial servitude."

The article on Mr. Gladstone's book, *The State in its Relations with the Church*, perhaps interests us more than it should, by reason of the courteous but severe handling given to "the young man of unblemished character and distinguished parliamentary talents—the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories," who have long since looked in another direction for hope and leadership. As regards Macaulay's main contention, that the spiritual and temporal powers should be kept apart as much as possible, few nowadays would dispute it. Mr. Stephen doubts whether we can draw the line between the spir-

itual and the secular.[1] And in our age of mixed and motley creeds, representing every degree of belief and unbelief, the task may be arduous. The real difficulty is this, that the State always asserts implicitly a creed or doctrine, by its legislation, even when most careful to avoid doing so in an explicit manner. Not to be with a religious doctrine, is to be against it. Even to ignore its claims or existence, is *quoad hoc* to be hostile to them. When the State establishes civil marriage, it puts an affront on the sacrament of marriage; when it undertakes to teach the commoner elements of morality in its schools, but refuses to further the inculcation of the Christian version of those elements, it is so far slighting Christianity. The result is ceaseless and illogical compromise, extending over the whole field of politics. And this condition of things can only be terminated either by the whole population becoming Christian, and identical in creed, or wholly agnostic. It by no means suited Macaulay's purpose to say this in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*. Perhaps he did not see his way so far. His maxim was—"Remove always practical grievances. Do not give a thought to anomalies which are not grievances." Thus, he was for maintaining the Episcopal Church in England, and the Presbyterian Church in Scotland; and for paying the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland. Against these practical makeshifts there is nothing to be said, if they produce peace. But in the domain of speculation they have no place. Mr. Gladstone's position —perhaps not very logically maintained—was, that the State was bound to be Christian, after the fashion of the Church of England. The counter position is, that the State is bound to be agnostic, after a fashion which no-

[1] *Hours in a Library*, 3rd series.

where completely exists. To say this in 1839 would have given rise to unbounded scandal. Macaulay was so hampered in his argument that he has been accused "of begging the question by evading the real difficulty." That may be true enough from one point of view; but he could hardly have been expected to write, in that day, very differently from what he did.

Critical Group.[1]—When Macvey Napier requested Macaulay to write for him an article on Scott he made answer, "I assure you that I would willingly, and even eagerly, undertake the subject which you propose, if I thought that I should serve you by doing so. But depend upon it, you do not know what you are asking for. . . . I am not successful in analyzing the works of genius. I have written several things on historical, political, and moral questions, of which, on the fullest reconsideration, I am not ashamed, and by which I am willing to be estimated; but I never have written a page of criticism on poetry or the fine arts which I would not burn if I had the power." Nothing could be more frank, modest, and true. After such a candid avowal it would be ungracious to find fault with pieces which their author wished to destroy. But it is not clear that he meant to include in this condemnation all the articles in this group: especially those on *Johnson* and *Bacon* might be supposed excepted, and to come under the head of those "moral questions" in his treatment of which he did not consider himself to have failed. They are much more moral studies than literary criticisms. Now, we have had occasion to notice that Macaulay's insight into character, unless it was exceptionally free from knots and straight in the grain, was fitful and uncertain. Neither Johnson

[1] Dryden, R. Montgomery, Byron, Bunyan, Johnson, Bacon, Hunt, Addison.

nor Bacon were men whom he could have been expected to see through with a wide and tolerant eye. With Johnson Boswell is inseparably associated; and Macaulay has spoken of him also with abundant emphasis. To these three, therefore, our remarks will be confined.

His paradox about Boswell is well known, and consists in tracing the excellence of his book to the badness of the author. Other men, we are told, have attained to literary eminence in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell attained it *by reason* of his weaknesses. "If he had not been a great fool, he would not have been a great writer." "He had quick observation and a retentive memory. These qualities, if he had been a man of sense and virtue, would scarcely have sufficed to make him conspicuous. But as he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, they have made him immortal." Sense and virtue have in that case a great deal to answer for, in depriving the world of masterly biographies. How it happened that the best of books was written by the most arrant of fools Macaulay neglects to explain. Blind chance, or a fortuitous concourse of atoms, have been supposed to offer a sufficient account of the origin of the world; and apparently something similar was imagined here. Critical helplessness could hardly go further. Still, although Macaulay habitually fails to analyze and exhibit the merits of literary work, he rarely overlooks them. Boswell, he says, had neither logic, eloquence, wit, learning, taste, nor so much of the reasoning faculty as to be capable even of sophistry. "He is always ranting or twaddling?" What, then, is there to praise in his book? The reports of Johnson's conversations, and those of the Club, might be the supposed answer. But did Macaulay, so able an artist himself, think nothing of the great and rare art of *mise en scène?* Did he suppose that a short-

hand writer's report of those famous wit-combats would have done as well, or better? The fact is, that no dramatist or novelist of the whole century surpassed, or even equalled, Boswell in rounded, clear, and picturesque presentation—in real dramatic faculty. Macaulay's attack on his moral character is even more offensive. He calls him an idolater and a slave; says he was like a creeper, which must cling to some stronger plant; and that it was only by accident that he did not fasten himself on Wilkes or Whitfield. Nothing could be more unjust, more unintelligent. Boswell's attitude to Johnson, as was so well pointed out by Carlyle, in an article which it is difficult not to regard in some respects as a covert answer to this of Macaulay's, was one of boundless reverence and love to a superior in intellect and moral worth. His feeling towards Paoli was of a similar kind. This fervent hero-worship Macaulay cannot in the least understand. In his view it was mere base sycophancy and toad-eating. Boswell, he says, "was always laying himself at the feet of some eminent man, and begging to be spit upon and trampled on." Well might Carlyle say that the last thing that Boswell would have done, if he had been a mere flunkey, would have been to act as he did. Johnson was never of much importance in the great world of fashion, into which he penetrated very nearly as little at the end as at the beginning of his career. Boswell could, as a Scotch Tory of good birth and an eldest son, easily have found much more serviceable patrons to whom to pay his court than the ragged, ill-tempered old scholar, who gave him many more kicks than halfpence. Macaulay might have recollected that he himself once paid his court to an insolent aristocrat, Lady Holland, who ordered her guests about as if they were footmen; that, though he certainly did not

waste his time in running after obscure sages, he knew quite well how, by a judicious mixture of independence and usefulness, to attract the notice of a powerful Minister. Boswell's faults and vices are obvious enough; but if he was the insufferable bore and noodle that Macaulay describes, how came Johnson—a man of masculine sense—to make him his intimate, to spend months with him in the daily contact of a long journey, and then pronounce him "the best travelling companion in the world?"

We now come to *Johnson.* Besides the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, we have the biography published in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, written twenty-five years afterwards. The latter, as belonging to his last and best manner, is more chaste in language, and more kindly and tolerant in tone, than the essay; still, it is essentially on the same lines of thought and sentiment. We have the same clear perception of the external husk of Johnson; but there is as little penetration into his deeper character in the one case as in the other. There is nothing unfair or ungenerous; especially in the biography there seems a fixed resolve to be as generous as possible; but the appreciation is inadequate, and chiefly confined to the surface. The following is nearly Macaulay's masterpiece in superficial portraiture, as showing his tendency to dwell on the outside appearance of character and little besides:

"Johnson grown old—Johnson in the fulness of his fame, and in the enjoyment of a competent fortune, is better known to us than any other man in history. Everything about him—his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his scrofula, his St. Vitus's dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked his approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite for fish-sauce and veal pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up

scraps of orange peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his puffings, his vigorous, acute, and ready eloquence, his sarcastic wit, his vehement insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage, his queer inmates—old Mr. Levett and blind Mrs. Williams, the cat Hodge, and negro Frank—all are as familiar to us as objects by which we have been surrounded from our childhood."

There is all through both pieces too much dwelling on Johnson's coarse manners, fits of ill-temper, and tendency to over-eat himself. These details are welcome in a biography, but out of place in a critical estimate. The only point of view from which Johnson can be properly judged is that which Macaulay never took up—the religious point of view. Johnson was an ardent believer, ever fighting with doubt. His heart was full of faith, while his intellect was inclined to scepticism. A great deal of his impatience and irritability arose from this dual condition of his mind and sentiments. He felt that if he listened to unbelief he would be lost. He was always wanting more evidence than he could get for supernatural things. That was why he hunted after the Cock Lane Ghost, and was always fond of stories that seemed to confirm the belief in a life beyond the grave. He disbelieved the earthquake of Lisbon, because it seemed to reflect on the benevolence of God. It is this insecure but ardent piety which gives him an interest and a pathos from which the common run of contented believers are generally free. Next to his piety, the profound tenderness of Johnson's nature is his most marked trait. When they are fused together, as they sometimes were, the result is inexpressibly touching, as in that notice in his diary of the death of his "dear old friend," Catherine Chambers. When we read of his incessant benevolence we can understand the love he inspired

in all who really knew him, which made Goldsmith say, "He has nothing of the bear but the skin;" and Burke say, when he was out-talked by Johnson, to some one's regret, "It is enough for me to have rung the bell for him." These things are not exactly overlooked by Macaulay, but they are not brought out; whereas Johnson's puffings, and gruntings, and perspiration when at his dinner, are made very prominent.

We now come, not without reluctance, to look at the deplorable article on *Bacon.*

The historical portion has only just lately received such an exposure at the hands of the late Mr. Spedding, that to dwell upon it here is as unnecessary as it would be impertinent. Two octavo volumes were not found more than sufficient to set forth the full proofs of Macaulay's quite astounding inaccuracies, misrepresentations, and even falsifications of truth. The only question that we can discuss even for a moment in this place is, what could have been Macaulay's motive for writing with such passion and want of good faith against a man whom in the same breath he extolled even to excess? We cannot suspect him—"a lump of good-nature"—of malignity. The probability is that his usual incapacity to see through an intricate character led him into airing one of those moral paradoxes of which he was fond. A jarring contrast of incompatible qualities, so far from repelling very much attracted him in a character. He seems to have thought it good fun to expand Pope's line into an article of a hundred pages. One can imagine him thinking as he wrote, "What will they say to this?" for the rest meaning no particular harm either to Bacon or any one. The piece has no moral earnestness about it, and is flippant in thought even when decorous in language.

The object is a deliberate attack and invective against all higher speculation, which is branded as mere cant and hypocrisy. The philosophy of both Zeno and Epicurus, we are told, was a "garrulous, declaiming, canting, wrangling philosophy." The philosophy of the ancients is pronounced "barren." The ancient philosophers, in those very matters "for the sake of which they neglected all the vulgar interests of mankind, did nothing, and worse than nothing." "We know that the philosophers were no better than other men. From the testimony of friends as well as foes, . . . it is plain that these teachers of virtue had all the vices of their neighbours with the additional vice of hypocrisy." Religion itself when allied with philosophy became equally pernicious. The great merit of Bacon was that he cleared his mind of all this rubbish. "He had no anointing for broken bones, no fine theories *de finibus*, no arguments to persuade men out of their senses. He knew that men and philosophers, as well as other men, do actually love life, health, comfort, honour, security, the society of friends; and do actually dislike death, sickness, pain, poverty, disgrace, danger, separation from those to whom they are attached. He knew that religion, though it often regulates and modifies these feelings, seldom eradicates them; nor did he think it desirable for mankind that they should be eradicated." Much more is said against the ancient philosophers, and in favour of Bacon, who appears moreover to have had two peculiar merits; first, that he never meddled with those enigmas "which have puzzled hundreds of generations, and will puzzle hundreds more"—the grounds of moral obligation and the freedom of the human will; secondly, that he despised speculative theology as much as he despised speculative philosophy. In short, his peculiar and extraordinary

quality was that he was an ἰδιώτης, a mere common man, and that is precisely why he was so great a philosopher. "It was because he dug deep that he was able to pile high," deep digging being apparently the characteristic of the common man.

The point especially deserving of notice in this extraordinary diatribe is, that all spiritual religion is as much aimed at as philosophy, though the attack is veiled with great prudence and skill. But every word said against philosophy would apply equally against religion. Every sneer and gibe flung at Plato, Zeno, and Epictetus would equally serve against Thomas à Kempis, St. Francis of Sales, or Jeremy Taylor. It is not at all easy to determine what could have induced Macaulay to commit this outrage. He is generally excessively observant of the *bienséances*. Was he avenging some old private grudge against a Puritanical education? Had he become convinced that spiritual aspirations were moonshine? There is certainly a vehemence in his onslaught which almost points to a personal injury, as Porson said of Gibbon's attack on Christianity. In any case we must admit that on no other occasion did Macaulay descend so low as on this. Nowhere else has he given us such an insight into the limitations of his heart and understanding, and of his strangely imperfect knowledge, with all his reading. It would require pages, where we have not room for sentences, to expound the matter fully. Take one or two instances, merely because they are short. He reproaches the ancient philosophy with having made no progress in eight hundred years: "Look at the schools of this wisdom four centuries before the Christian era and four centuries after that era. Compare the men whom those schools formed at those two periods. Compare Plato and Libanius; Pericles

and Julian. This philosophy confessed, nay, boasted, that for every end but one it was useless. Had it attained that one end?" It is difficult to handle the sciolism implied in such remarks and such a question. What had occurred between the dates specified—those of Pericles and Julian? Only the conquest of the world by the Romans, the rise and fall of the Roman Republic and Empire, the invasion of the barbarians, and the proximate dissolution of society. This is to count for nothing. The greatest revolution in human annals—the death throes, in short, of the old world—could not be expected to influence the course and value of speculation! The thing to notice was, that Libanius was inferior to Plato, and Julian to Pericles, and that settled the point that the ancient philosophy was nothing but cant and hypocrisy. Again, we are asked to believe that it was through the perversity of a few great minds that the blessings of the experimental philosophy were so long withheld from the world. The human mind had been "misdirected;" "trifles occupied the sharp and vigorous intellects" of the Greeks and of the schoolmen. Socrates and Plato were the chief authors of this evil, which tainted the whole body of ancient philosophy "from the time of Plato downwards." Plato has to bear the enormous guilt of having "done more than any other person towards giving the minds of speculative men that bent which they retained till they received from Bacon a new impulse in a diametrically opposite direction." Had it not been for these lamentable aberrations with which Macaulay says he has no patience, we should have had, no doubt, diving-bells, steam-engines, and vaccination in the time of the Peloponnesian war; or why not say in the time of the Trojan war, or even of Noah's ark? That society and the human intellect have laws of organic growth, the stages of

which cannot be transposed, any more than the periods of youth and old age can be transposed in the life of an individual, was a conception which never dawned even faintly on Macaulay's mind. He was as little competent to speak of experimental science, which he belauded, as of philosophy, which he vilified. He says several times in various forms that science should only be cultivated for its immediate practical and beneficial results. He applauds Bacon because "he valued geometry chiefly if not solely on account of those uses which to Plato appeared so base," for his love of "those pursuits which *directly* tend to improve the condition of mankind," for the importance ascribed "to those arts which increase the outward comforts of our species;" and he excuses any over-strength of statement in this matter by saying that it was an error in the right direction, and that he vastly prefers it to the opposite error of Plato. Now, this shows that he failed to grasp the method of science as much as the method and import of philosophy. Science has never prospered until it has freed itself from bondage to the immediate wants of life —till it has pursued its investigations with perfect indifference as to the results and uses to which they may be applied. But it is needless to pursue the subject. The effect of the whole article is the same as that produced by a man of rude manners making his way into a refined and well-bred company. With an unbecoming carriage and a loud voice he goes up to the dignified dames—the ancient Philosophies—one after another and asks them what they do there; mocks at their fine ways; and finishes by telling them roundly that in his opinion they are all no better than they should be. Nothing that Macaulay has written has been more injurious to his fame as a serious thinker.

Nevertheless, say what we will, Macaulay's *Essays* remain a brilliant and fascinating page in English literature. The world is never persistently mistaken in such cases. Time enough has elapsed, since their publication, to submerge them in oblivion had they not contained a vital spark of genius which criticism is powerless to extinguish. If not wells of original knowledge, they have acted like irrigating rills which convey and distribute the fertilizing waters from the fountain-head. The best would adorn any literature, and even the less successful have a picturesque animation, and convey an impression of power that will not easily be matched. And, again, we need to bear in mind that they were the productions of a writer immersed in business, written in his scanty moments of leisure when most men would have rested or sought recreation. Macaulay himself was most modest in his estimate of their value, and resisted their republication as long as he could. It was the public that insisted on their re-issue, and few would be bold enough to deny that the public was right.

CHAPTER IV.

NARRATIVE OF MACAULAY'S LIFE RESUMED UP TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE HISTORY.

[1841–1848.]

"SIR," said Dr. Johnson, "it is wonderful how little Garrick assumes. No, sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habuit.* Then, sir, Garrick did not find, but made his way, to the tables, the levees, and almost the bedchambers of the great. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me to knock down everybody that stood in the way." One is reminded of these wise and kindly words from the rough but tender-hearted old moralist when reflecting on the uniform success and prosperity which attended Macaulay in everything he undertook. With the single exception of his failing to secure a place in the Tripos at Cambridge, which, after all, had no evil effects, as he obtained a Fellowship notwithstanding, he did not put his hand to a thing without winning loud applause. In his story there are no failures to record. The trials and straitened means of his early years arose from no fault of his. As soon as he began to rebuild the shattered fortunes of his family the work went on without break or interruption, and was triumphantly accomplished before he had reached his fortieth year. But he had

done much more than restore his material circumstances: in the mean while he had acquired a wide and brilliant fame. He had made his way to the tables, the levees, and bedchambers of the great. A *novus homo*, he was treated with the distinction which in our aristocratic society was at that time nearly always reserved for the so-called "well-born." And yet he, like Garrick, bore his honours, if not meekly, yet without a particle of insolence or assumption, or the least symptom that his head had been turned. And this was the result, not of religious or philosophic discipline, of a conscious moral cultivation of humility, and a sober spirit, but of mere sweetness of nature and constitutional amiability.

After his fall or, perhaps we should say, his rise from office he almost immediately proceeded to tempt fortune in a very perilous way. He put forth a volume of poems —the *Lays of Ancient Rome.* His eyes were quite open to the risk. To Napier, who had expressed doubts about the venture, he wrote:

"I do not wonder at your misgivings. I should have felt similar misgivings if I had learned that any person, however distinguished by talents and knowledge, whom I knew as a writer only by prose works, was about to publish a volume of poetry—had I seen advertised a poem by Mackintosh, by Dugald Stewart, or even by Burke, I should have augured nothing but failure; and I am far from putting myself on a level with the least of the three."

Few writers have surpassed Macaulay in that most useful of all gifts, a clear and exact knowledge of the reach and nature of his talents. It never stood him in better stead than on the present occasion.

It will be remembered that he was engaged on the lay of *Horatius* when he was in Italy. But he had written two *Lays* while in India, and submitted them to Dr. Ar-

nold of Rugby, who had spoken of them with high praise. The subject had thus been a long time in his mind, and the composition, though no doubt often interrupted, had been most careful and deliberate. Macaulay had the faculty of rhyme in no common degree, and he was also a scientific prosodian. He consulted his friends about his verses, and, what was less common, he took their advice when they pointed out defects. Several years off and on, thus employed on four poems, which together do not amount to two-thirds of *Marmion*, were a guarantee against hasty work; and the result corresponds. The versification of the *Lays* is technically without blemish, and this correctness has been purchased by no sacrifice of vigour. On the contrary, Macaulay's prose at its best is not so terse as his verse. He had naturally a tendency to declamation. In the *Lays* this tendency is almost entirely suppressed, as if the greater intensity of thought needed for metrical composition had consumed the wordy undergrowth of rhetoric, and lifted him into a clearer region, where he saw the facts with unimpeded vision. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the rhythm is somewhat monotonous and mechanical. The melody never wanders spontaneously into new and unexpected modulation, and seems rather the result of care and labour than a natural gift of music. Some lines are strangely harsh, as

"So spun she, and so sang she,"

a concourse of sibilants which can hardly be spoken, and would have shocked a musical ear.

But the *Lays* have, nevertheless, very considerable poetical merit, on which it is the more necessary to dwell, as there appears to be disposition in some quarters to only grudgingly allow it, or even to deny it. The marked taste

of intelligent children for Macaulay's poems is not to be undervalued. It shows, as Mr. Maurice said, that there was something fresh, young, and unsophisticated in the mind of the writer. But Macaulay has no reason to fear a more critical tribunal. There is a directness of presentation in his best passages, the poetical result is so independent of any artifice of language or laboured pomp of diction, but, on the contrary, arises so naturally from mere accuracy of drawing and clear vision of the fact, that the question is not whether his work is good, but whether in its kind it has often been surpassed. Mr. Ruskin insists strongly on "the peculiar dignity possessed by all passages which limit their expression to the pure fact, and leave the hearer to gather what he can from it."[1] This acknowledged sign of strength is very frequent in Macaulay's *Lays*. Few writers indulge less in the pathetic fallacy than he. Line after line contains nothing but the most simple statement of fact in quite unadorned language. For instance:

> "But with a crash like thunder
> Fell every loosened beam,
> And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
> Lay right athwart the stream;
> And a long shout of triumph
> Rose from the walls of Rome,
> As to the highest turret-tops
> Was splashed the yellow foam."

Every statement here might be made with propriety by a simple man, as, *e. g.*, a carpenter who had witnessed the event—the noise of the falling fabric, its position in the river, the exulting shout which naturally followed, the splash of *yellow* foam—no otiose epithet, as the Tiber was the stream. Each line might form part of a bald report,

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. c. 12.

and yet the whole is graphic simply because it is literally true. The art, like all art, of course consists in seeing and seizing the right facts and giving them prominence. Macaulay's power of drawing, at once accurate and characteristic, gives to his descriptions at times a sharpness of outline which seems borrowed from sculpture:

"Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see;
Nought spake he to Lars Porsena;
To Sextus nought spake he.
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home,
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome:

"'O Tiber! Father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
Take thou in charge this day!'
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back
Plunged headlong in the tide."

Is there not a definite objectiveness of presentation here almost statuesque?

Macaulay's calmness and self-restraint in verse are very marked as compared with the opposite qualities which he sometimes displays in prose. Occasionally he reaches a note of tragic solemnity without effort, and by the simplest means, as in the visions which haunted Sextus:

"Lavinium and Laurentum
Had on the left their post,
With all the banners of the marsh,
And banners of the coast.

Their leader was false Sextus
  That wrought the deed of shame;
With restless pace and haggard face
  To his last field he came.
Men said he saw strange visions
  Which none beside might see,
And that strange sounds were in his ears
  Which none might hear but he.
A woman fair and stately,
  But pale as are the dead,
Oft through the watches of the night
  Sat spinning by his bed;
And as she plied the distaff,
  In a sweet voice and low
She sang of great old houses,
  And fights fought long ago.
So spun she, and so sang she,
  Until the east was gray,
Then pointed to her bleeding breast,
  And shrieked, and fled away."

But his poetical merit, considerable as it was, is not the most important and interesting feature in the *Lays of Ancient Rome.* In literary classification Macaulay, of course, belongs to what is called the romantic school; he could not do otherwise, living when he did. He was five years old when the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was published, and he received in the impressionable period of youth the full impact of the Waverley novels. We have already seen how much they contributed to form his notions of history. It was not likely when he took to writing ballads that the influence of Scott would be less than when he wrote prose. Accordingly we meet with a reminiscence and echo of Scott all through the *Lays.* This was unavoidable, and Macaulay seeks in no wise to disguise the fact. On the other hand, no one could resemble Scott less in his

deeper sympathies and cast of mind than Macaulay. Scott had the instinct of a wild animal for the open air, the forest, the hill-side. He

> "Loved nature like a horned cow,
> Deer or bird or carribou,"

and thought that if he did not see the heather once a year he should die. Macaulay was a born *citadin*, and cared for nature hardly at all. His sister doubted whether any scenery ever pleased him so much as his own Holly Lodge, or Mr. Thornton's garden at Battersea Rise. Scott, again, was full of the romantic spirit. His mind dwelt by preference on the past, which was lovely to him. Macaulay had an American belief and delight in modern material progress, and was satisfied that no age in the past was ever as good as the present. Scott's notions of politics were formed on the feudal pattern. He could understand and admire fealty, the devotion of vassal to lord, the personal attachment of clansman to his chief, but of the reasoned obedience and loyalty of the citizen to the state, to the polity of which he forms a part, Scott seems as good as unconscious. It would not be easy to quote, from his poems at least, a passage which implied any sympathy with civil duty and sacrifice to the *res publica*, to the common weal. As Mr. Ruskin says, his sympathies are rather with outlaws and rebels, especially under the "greenwood tree," and he has but little objection to rebellion even to a king, provided it be on private and personal grounds, and not systematic or directed to great public aims. This was the genuine feudal spirit, which ignored the state and the correlated notion of citizenship, and trusted for social cohesion to the fragile tie of the liegeman's sworn fidelity to his suzerain. Nothing stirred Scott's blood more than military

prowess, the conflict of armed men, but he remains contented with the conflict; he cares little in what cause men fight, so long as they do fight and accomplish "deeds of arms." It may be for love, or the point of honor, or because the chief commands it, or merely for the luxury of exchanging blows; but for the patriotic valour which fights for hearth and home, and native city, he has hardly a word to say.

On opening Macaulay's *Lays* we find ourselves in a world which is the exact opposite of this;—civic patriotism, zeal for the public weal, whether against foreign foe or domestic tyrant—these are his sources of inspiration. And there is thus a curious contrast, almost contradiction, between the outward form of the poems and their contents. The real romantic ballad and its modern imitations properly refer to times in which the notion of a state, composed of citizens who support it on reasoned grounds, has not emerged. The *polis* is not to be found in Homer, or in *Chevy Chase*, or in Scott. In Macaulay's ballads the State is everything. His love for ordered civil life, his zeal for the abstract idea of government instituted for the well-being of all who live under it, are as intense in him as they were in the breast of Pericles. Thus the key-note of the ballads is as remote as possible from that of Scott, and indeed of all mediævalists, and not only remote, but very much nobler. The fighting in the *Lays* does not arise from mere reckless, light-hearted ferocity,

> "That marked the foeman's feudal hate,"

but from lofty social union, which leads the brave to self-sacrifice for the common good.

> "For Romans in Rome's quarrel
> Spared neither land nor gold,
> Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
> In the brave days of old."

And this higher moral strain has its poetic reward. Macaulay attains a heroism of sentiment which Scott never reaches. Compare the almost effeminate sob over James killed at Flodden:

"He saw the wreck his rashness wrought:
Reckless of life he desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain.
And well in death his trusty brand
Firm clenched within his manly hand
Beseemed the monarch slain;
But O! how changed since yon blithe night!
Gladly I turn me from the sight
Unto my tale again."

Compare this with the exultant and fiery joy over the death of Valerius:

XVIII.

"But fiercer grew the fighting
Around Valerius dead;
For Titus dragged him by the foot
And Aulus by the head.
'On, Latines, on!' quoth Titus,
'See how the rebels fly!'
'Romans, stand firm,' quoth Aulus,
'And win this fight or die.
They must not give Valerius
To raven and to kite;
For aye Valerius loathed the wrong,
And aye upheld the right;
And for your wives and babies
In the front rank he fell.
Now play the men for the good house
That loves the people well.'

XIX.

"Then tenfold round the body
The roar of battle rose,
Like the roar of a burning forest
When a strong north wind blows.

Now backward, and now forward,
  Rocked furiously the fray,
Till none could see Valerius,
  And none wist where he lay.
For shivered arms and ensigns
  Were heaped there in a mound,
And corpses stiff, and dying men
  That writhed and gnawed the ground;
And wounded horses kicking,
  And snorting purple foam:
Right well did such a couch befit
  A consular of Rome."

Macaulay had thoroughly assimilated the lofty civic spirit of the ancients — a spirit which was seriously injured when not wholly destroyed in the Middle Ages by Feudalism and Catholicism together.

The lay of *Virginia* is of less even and sustained excellence than the two lays which precede it. The speech of Icilius and the description of the tumult which followed are admirable for spirit and vigour. It may be noticed generally that Macaulay is always very successful in his descriptions of excited crowds—he does it *con amore*—he had none of the disdain for the multitude which Carlyle manifests in and out of season. On this occasion the liberal politician combined with the artist to produce a powerful effect. He had a noble hatred of tyranny, and his sympathies were wholly with the many as against the few. There was a righteous fierceness in him at the sight of wrong, which is the stuff of which true patriots in troubled times are made.

"And thrice the tossing Forum set up a frightful yell:
'See, see, thou dog! what thou hast done, and hide thy shame in hell.
Thou that wouldst make our maidens slaves must first make slaves of men.
Tribunes! hurrah for Tribunes! Down with the wicked ten!'"

This speech of Icilius is no closet rhetoric composed by a man who had never addressed a mob; it is the speech of a practised orator who knows how to rouse passion and set men's hearts on fire. It is also a thoroughly dramatic speech; good in itself, but made much better by the situation of the supposed speaker. From a modern point of view it is better than the speech which Livy makes Icilius deliver, with its references to Roman law. On the other hand, the speech of Virginius to his daughter, just before he stabs her, is quite as bad as that of Icilius is good. It is a singular thing that Macaulay, whose sensibility and genuine tenderness of nature are quite beyond doubt, had almost no command of the pathetic. The explanation seems to be that he really was too sensitive. He says in his diary: "I generally avoid novels which are said to have much pathos. The suffering which they produce is to me a very real suffering, and of that I have quite enough without them." The fact, though highly creditable to his heart, shows a marked limitation of range, and excludes him from the class of artists by nature who are at once susceptible and masters of emotion. Feeling must have subsided into serene calm before it can be successfully embodied in art. In any case Macaulay seems to have been unusually incapable of, or averse to, the expression of tender and pathetic sentiment. He has in his correspondence and diaries more than once occasion to refer to the deaths of friends whom we know he loved, and he always does so in a curiously awkward manner, as if he were ashamed of his feelings, and wished to hide them even from himself. "Jeffrey is gone, dear fellow; I loved him as much as it is easy to love a man who belongs to an older generation. . . . After all, dear Jeffrey's death is hardly a matter for mourning." He had been on terms of

affectionate intimacy with Jeffrey for more than twenty-five years. On hearing that Harry Hallam was dying at Sienna he says: "What a trial for my dear old friend!" (The historian.) "I feel for the lad himself too. Much distressed, I dined, however. We dine, unless the blow comes very, very near the heart indeed." There is evidently a deliberate avoidance of giving way to the expression of grief. And yet when he comes across some of his sister Margaret's letters twenty-two years after her death, he is overcome, and bursts into tears. Macaulay could not hold the more passionate emotions sufficiently at arm's length to describe them properly when he felt them. And when they were passed his imagination did not reproduce them with a clearness available for art. A man on the point of stabbing his daughter to save her from dishonour would certainly not think of making the stagy declamation which Macaulay has put into the mouth of Virginius. The frigid conceits about "Capua's marble halls," and the kite gloating upon his prey, are the last things that would occur to a mind filled with such awful passions. Macaulay would have done better on this occasion to copy the impressive brevity of Livy, "Hoc te uno, quo possum modo, filia in libertatem vindico." If it be said that the object was not historical or even poetical verisimilitude, but to write an exciting ballad, such as might be supposed to stir the contemporaries of Licinius and Sextius, the answer will be given presently in reference to a parallel but much simpler case.

The Prophecy of Capys is distinctly languid as a whole, though it has some fine stanzas, and contains one of the most delicate touches of colour that Macaulay ever laid on:

> "And Venus loves the whispers
> Of plighted youth and maid,

In April's ivory moonlight,
Beneath the chestnut's shade."

The unclouded moon of Italy lighting up the limestone rocks produces just the nuance of green ivory. Generally his sense of colour is weak compared with Scott, whose eye for colour is such that while reading him we seem to be gazing on the purple glory of the hills when the heather is in bloom: Macaulay is gray and dun. It is curious to compare how Macaulay and Scott deal with the same situation, that of a person anxiously watching for the appearance of another. Scott does it by putting the sense of sight on the alert:

"The noble dame on turret high,
Who waits her gallant knight,
Looks to the western beam to spy
The flash of armour bright;
The village maid, with hand on brow
The level ray to shade,
Upon the foot-path watches now
For Colin's darkening plaid."

Macaulay puts the sense of hearing on guard:

"Since the first gleam of daylight
Sempronius had not ceased
To listen for the rushing
Of horse-hoofs from the east."

A keen sense of colour is the peculiar note, one might say the badge, of the romantic school, and this is true even of musicians (compare Handel, Bach, Haydn, with Beethoven, Schumann, and Wagner). It is not without interest that we find Macaulay a sort of forced disciple of the romantic school, differing from it in this as well as in the other peculiarities above mentioned.

The Prophecy of Capys suggests a sense of fatigue

and flagging inspiration in the writer which are not without a certain significance, and may help to throw light on a question which has a certain interest for some persons. The question is, whether Macaulay should be considered a poet or not. "Some fastidious critics," says Mr. Trevelyan, "think it proper to deny him that title." Now, if by this is meant that he not only was no poet but wrote no poetry, the statement is obviously excessive and unfair. To have written poetry does not necessarily constitute a man a poet. We need to know, before according that title to a man, what relative proportion the poetic vein bore to the rest of his nature; how far poetry was his natural and spontaneous mode of utterance. It is evident that quantity as well as quality has to be considered. Should we consider the writer of the best sonnet that ever was written a poet if he never had written anything else? Was Single-speech Hamilton an orator? When Johnson called Gray a "barren rascal," he implied in coarse language a truth of some importance, and passed a just criticism on Gray. Facile abundance is not necessarily a merit in itself, but it at least points to natural fertility of the soil, and its adaptation to the crop produced. On the other hand, rare exotics painfully reared by artificial means, have not often more than a fancy value. Shelley writing the twelve books of the *Revolt of Islam* in a few months, Byron writing the first canto of *Don Juan* in a few weeks, showed by so doing that poetry was the spontaneous product of their minds, that the labour was small compared with the greatness of the result, and that, in short, the natural richness of the soil was the cause of their fertility. From this point of view it is manifest that Macaulay was no poet, though certainly he has written poetry. Directed by an immense knowl-

edge of literature and a cultivated taste — by watching for the movements of inspiration, by the careful storage of every raindrop that fell from the clouds of fancy, he collected a small vessel full of clear, limpid water, the sparkling brightness of which it is unjust not to acknowledge. But the process was too slow and laborious to justify us in calling him a poet. What a different gale impelled him when he wrote prose! He has only to shake out the sheet, and his sails become concave and turgid with the breeze. That is to say, prose was his vocation, poetry was not. But that is no reason why we should not admire *Horatius*, as one of the best ballads in the language. As Lessing wrote dramas by dint of critical acumen, without, according to his own conviction, any natural dramatic talent, so Macaulay wrote two or three graceful poems by the aid of great culture and trained literary taste.

A question was left unanswered on a former page, and reference was made to a parallel case. The question was, whether such a lay as that of *Virginia* was in any degree more likely to represent an original lost lay written at the time of the Licinian Rogations than one written at the Decemvirate. One of Macaulay's best ballads after the *Lays* may help us to answer the question. *The Battle of Ivry*, though not so careful and finished in language as the *Lays*, is equal to any of them in fire. It is full also of what is called local colour and those picturesque touches which delight the admirers of the pseudo-antique. Now, it happens that we have a Huguenot lay on this very subject, and it is interesting to compare the genuine article with the modern imitation. The romance and chivalry which Macaulay, following the taste of his time, has infused into his ballad are entirely wanting in the Huguenot song, which is very little more than a dull and

somewhat fierce hymn with a strong Old Testament flavour. In the modern poem the real local colour, the real sentiments with which a Huguenot regarded the defeat of the League, are omitted, and replaced by picturesque and graceful sentiments, against which the only thing to be said is that they are entirely wanting in historical fidelity and truth. Even matters of fact are incorrectly given. No one would infer from Macaulay's ballad that Henry IV.'s army contained the flower of the French nobility, Catholic as well as Protestant; and as for the "lances" and "thousand spears in rest" with which he arms Henry's knights, it was one of the latter's military innovations to have suppressed and replaced them by sabres and pistols, far more efficacious weapons at close quarters. But the romantic, chivalrous, and joyous tone is that which most contrasts with the gloomy, religious spirit of the original. The song is supposed to be made in the name of Henry of Navarre, who gives all the glory to God. Two or three stanzas out of twenty will be sufficient to quote:

"Je chante ton honneur sous l'effect de mes armes,
A ta juste grandeur je rapporte le tout,
Car, du commencement du milieu jusqu'au bout,
Toy seul m'as guaranty au plus fort des allarmes.

"Du plus haut de ton Ciel regardant en la terre,
Méprisant leur audace et des graves sourcis,
Desdaignant ces mutins, soudain tu les as mis
Au plus sanglant malheur que sceut porter la guerre.

"Le jour cesse plustost que la chasse ne cesse;
Tout ce camp désolé ne se peut asseurer,
Et à peine la nuict les laisse respirer,
Car les miens courageux les poursuyvoyent sans cesse."[1]

[1] *Le Chansonnier Huguenot*, du xvie siècle, vol. ii. p. 315.

So we see that the chivalrous humanitarian sentiments which Macaulay has put in the mouth of his Huguenot bard are without foundation.

> "But out spake gentle Henry: 'No Frenchman is my foe;
> Down, down with every foreigner, but let your brethren go.'
> Oh! was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,
> As our sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre?'"

"Beaucoup de fantassins français furent néanmoins sabrés ou arquebusés dans la première fureur de la victoire! la déroute fut au moins aussi sanglante que le combat." Now, the question mooted was as to the probability of these ballads having any historical fidelity or verisimilitude. With regard to a ballad not three hundred years old, we find one of them has none. What is the probability of those which pretend to go back a good deal over two thousand years being more accurate?

And this brings us to the consideration of the question whether we can honestly compliment and congratulate Macaulay on his *Lays of Ancient Rome.* The preceding remarks, it is hoped, show no tendency to morose hypercriticism. But does it raise one's opinion of Macaulay's earnest sincerity of mind to find him devoting some considerable time to the production of what he candidly admitted to be but trifles, though "scholar-like and not inelegant trifles?" He could very well lay his finger on the defects of Bulwer's *Last Days of Pompeii:* "It labours," he says, "under the usual faults of all works in which it is attempted to give moderns a glimpse of ancient manners. After all, between us and them there is a great gulf which no learning will enable a man to clear." At the very time he made this entry in his journal he was composing his lay on *Horatius*, a much more difficult task

than Bulwer's, for our knowledge of Roman manners under the empire may be said to be intimate and exact as compared with our knowledge of Roman manners in the semi-mythic period of the early republic. Was it a worthy occupation for a serious scholar to spend his time in producing mere fancy pictures, which could have no value beyond a certain prettiness, "in the prolongation from age to age of romantic historical descriptions instead of sifted truth?"[1] Could we imagine Grote or Mommsen, or Ranke or Freeman engaged in such a way without a certain sense of degradation? This is not making much of a small matter; it is really important, reaching down, if you consider it well, to the deeper elements of character and primary motive. Macaulay's love and pursuit of truth, which he imagined to be dominant passions with him, were relatively feeble. The subject has already been referred to. It is strange to see how much he deceived himself on this point. In the ambitious and wordy verses he composed on the evening of his defeat at Edinburgh he feigns that all the Fairies passed his cradle by without a blessing, except the Fairy Queen of Knowledge; and she, the "mightiest and the best," pronounced:

> "Yes; thou wilt love me with exceeding love."

And the three illustrious predecessors whom in this particular he wishes most to resemble, and who are alone mentioned, are the three oddly chosen names of Bacon, Hyde, and Milton, in all of whom we may confidently say that the love of truth was *not* the prominent and striking feature of their character and genius. Of Bacon, Macaulay himself has rather overstated, while he deplored, the weakness of his love of truth as compared to his love

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. c. 5

of place and honours. What Hyde has to do in such company more than other statesmen, ancient or modern, it is difficult to see. And in what way did Milton show a love of truth more than any other poet? Macaulay's notion of the sentiment he claimed seems to have been abundantly vague. Kepler verifying his laws and going over the calculations one hundred and fifty times, in the mean while writing almanacks to keep him from starving; Newton working out his theory of gravitation for years, and modestly putting it aside, because the erroneous data on which he calculated led to incorrect results, then on corrected data writing the *Principia;* nay, Franklin running an unknown risk of his life by identifying by means of his kite electricity with lightning; and countless other loyal servants of science might have been cited with relevancy as types of lovers of truth. It is a misuse of language to confuse a general love of literature, or a very sensible zeal in getting up the materials for historical scene-painting, with the stern resolution which lays siege to nature's secrets, and will not desist till they are surrendered. But such pains are undertaken only at the bidding of a passionate desire for an answer by minds which can perceive the test-problems which have not yet capitulated, but which must be reduced before any further advance into the Unknown can be safely made. It is a peculiarity of Macaulay's mind that he rarely sees problems, that he is not stopped by difficulties out of which he anxiously seeks an issue. We never find him wondering with suspended judgment in what direction his course may lie. On the contrary, he has seldom any doubt or difficulty about anything—his mind is always made up, and he has a prompt answer for every question. We may without scruple say that the course of a genuine love of truth has never run so smooth. Here was the

early history of Rome full of difficulties which clamoured for further research and elucidation. The subject had been just sufficiently worked to whet the curiosity and interest of an inquiring mind. There were not many men in Europe more fitted by classical attainments to take the problems suggested in hand, and advance them a stage nearer to a correct solution. Macaulay did not consider the matter in this light at all. To have written a scholar-like essay on early Roman history would have been to write for a few score readers in the English and German universities. The love of truth which he imagined that he possessed would have directed him into that course. But if he had taken it his biographer would most certainly not have been able to inform us of anything so imposing as this: "Eighteen thousand of the *Lays of Ancient Rome* were sold in ten years, forty thousand in twenty years, and by June, 1875, upwards of a hundred thousand copies had passed into the hands of readers."

Macaulay did not after leaving office avail himself of his leisure to resume his interrupted history with the zeal and promptitude that might have been expected. Besides the *Lays*, he allowed other and even less important things to waste his time. He was by no means so resolute in resisting the blandishments of society as he should have been, and as he afterwards became. "I have had so much time occupied by politics and by the society which at this season fills London that I have written nothing for some weeks," he wrote to Macvey Napier. He would have shown more robustness of character and a more creditable absorption in his work, if he had courageously renounced for good and all both society and politics, now that he was for the first time in his life free to devote all his energies to a great work. Instead of that, he loitered for fully

three years before he threw himself with passionate single-hearted concentration on his *History*. This shows that the book, after all, was not generated in the deeper and more earnest parts of his nature, but came mostly from the fancy and understanding. Or perhaps we should not be very wrong if we surmise that depth and earnestness were somewhat wanting in him. He had no latent heat of sustained enthusiasm, either scientific, political, or artistic. By a vigorous spurt he could write a brilliant article, which rarely required more than a few weeks. His ambition, which, like all his passions, was moderate and amiable, was largely satisfied by the very considerable honours which he acquired by his contributions to the blue-and-yellow *Review;* he had none of the fierce and relentless thirst for a great fame which drives some men into wrapt isolation, where they are free to nurse and indulge their moods of creative passion. Neither was he under the dominion of a great thought which hedges a man with solitude even in a crowd. On the other hand, it is only just to remember that the pressure put upon him to leave his work was severe. Both in Parliament and the *Edinburgh Review* he was able to render services which were not likely to be foregone, by those who needed them, without a hard struggle. For nearly twenty years the quarterly organ of the Whigs had enjoyed a new lease of popularity and power through his contributions. In the House of Commons the beaten and dejected Whigs were grateful beyond words for the welcome aid of his brilliant and destructive oratory. Mr. Napier appears to have been inconsiderately importunate for articles, and Macaulay, though protesting that he must really now devote himself to his *History*, with amiable weakness ends by giving in and writing. But the sacrifice was really too great, and he ought to

have seen that it was. He did at last, and, resolutely putting his foot down, declared that he would write no more for the *Review* till he had brought out two volumes of his book. He wrote to Napier:

"I hope that you will make your arrangements for some three or four numbers without counting on me. I find it absolutely necessary to concentrate my attention on my historical work. You cannot conceive how difficult I find it to do two things at a time. Men are differently made. Southey used to work regularly two hours a day on the *History of Brazil;* then an hour for the *Quarterly Review;* then an hour on the *Life of Wesley;* then two hours on the *Peninsular War;* then an hour on the *Book of the Church.* I cannot do so. I get into the stream of my narrative, and am going along as smoothly and quickly as possible. Then comes the necessity of writing for the *Review.* I lay my *History* aside; and when after some weeks I resume it, I have the greatest difficulty in recovering the interrupted train of thought. *But for the Review, I should already have brought out two volumes at least.* I must really make a resolute effort, or my plan will end as our poor friend Mackintosh's ended."

This self-reproach and this comparison with Mackintosh are constantly flowing from his pen:

"Another paper from me is at present out of the question. One in half a year is the utmost of which I can hold out any hopes. I ought to give my whole leisure to my *History;* and fear that if I suffer myself to be diverted from that design, as I have done, I shall be like poor Mackintosh, leave behind me the character of a man who would have done something, if he had concentrated his powers instead of frittering them away. . . . I must not go on dawdling and reproaching myself all my life."

This sacrifice to editorial importunity was the more regrettable, as articles, written under this pressure, with one exception, have added little to Macaulay's fame. The fact is in no wise surprising. Task-work of this kind, even though undertaken at the bidding of friendship, is apt to

betray a want both of maturity and spontaneous inspiration. Saving the article on Chatham—a subject which lay in the course of his studies, and with which he took great pains, writing it over three times — Macaulay's contributions to the *Edinburgh* at this period have largely the characteristics of what are vulgarly called "pot-boilers," though in his case they were written to keep, not his own, but another man's pot boiling. The articles on Madame D'Arblay's *Memoirs* and on Frederick the Great are thin, crude, perfunctory, and valueless, except as first-rate padding for a periodical review. In the latter he cannot even spell the name of the Principality of Frederick's favourite sister Wilhelmina correctly—always writing Bareuth instead of Baireuth; it is but a small error, but it indicates haste, as he was usually careful in the orthography of proper names. But there are worse faults than this. When off his guard, especially when contemptuous or angry, Macaulay easily lapsed into an uncurbed vehemence of language which bordered on vulgarity:

"Frederick by no means relinquished his hereditary privilege of kicking and cudgelling. His practice, however, as to that matter, differed in some important respects from his father's. To Frederick William the mere circumstance that any person whatever, men, women, or children, Prussians or foreigners, were within reach of his toes or his cane, appeared to be a sufficient reason for proceeding to belabour them. Frederick required provocation, as well as vicinity."

Again: "The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled the Chancellor; he kicked the shins of his judges." Of Voltaire's skill in flattery he remarks: "And it was only from his hand that so much sugar could be swallowed without making the swallower sick." In the article on Madame D'Arblay her German colleague, Madame Schwellenberg, is described

with a coarseness of tone worthy of the original: "a hateful old toad-eater, as illiterate as a chamber-maid, and proud as a whole German chapter." Madame Schwellenberg "raved like a maniac in the incurable ward of Bedlam." Madame Schwellenberg "raged like a wild-cat."

Macaulay never fully appreciated the force of moderation, the impressiveness of calm under-statement, the penetrating power of irony. His nature was essentially simple and not complex; when a strong feeling arose in his mind it came forth at once naked and unashamed; it met with no opposition from other feelings capable of modifying or restraining it. A great deal of his clearness springs from this single, uninvolved character of his emotions, which never blend in rich, polyphonic chords, filling the ear of the mind. Somewhat of this simplicity appears to have been reflected in his countenance. Carlyle, who was practically acquainted with a very different internal economy, once observed Macaulay's face in repose, as he was turning over the pages of a book. "I noticed," he said, "the homely Norse features that you find everywhere in the Western Isles, and I thought to myself, 'Well, any one can see that you are an honest, good sort of fellow, made out of oatmeal!'" He resembled the straight-splitting pine rather than the gnarled oak. To liken a woman on account of her ill-temper to a raving maniac and a wild-cat excited in him no qualms; the epithets expressed his feelings, but no counter wave of fastidious taste surged up, compelling a recast of the whole expression.

It is some confirmation of a view already advanced in these pages that Macaulay's natural aptitude was rather oratorical than literary, that at this very time he was making some of his best speeches in Parliament. The fine literary sense of nuance, the scrupulous choice of epi-

thet, the delicacy which it alarmed by loud tones and colours—in short, the qualities most rare and precious in a writer—are out of place in oratory, which is never more effective than when inspired by manly and massive emotion, enforcing broad and simple conclusions. It is impossible to read Macaulay's speeches without feeling that in delivering them he was wielding an instrument of which he was absolutely the master. The luminous order and logical sequence of the parts are only surpassed by the lofty unity and coherence of the whole. High, statesman-like views are unfolded in language that is at once terse, chaste, and familiar, never fine-drawn or over-subtle, but plain, direct, and forcible, exactly suited to an audience of practical men. Above all, the noble and generous sentiment, which burns and glows through every sentence, melts the whole mass of argument, illustration, and invective into a torrent of majestic oratory, which is as far above the eloquence of rhetoric as high poetry is above the mere rhetoric of verse. It is the more necessary to dwell on this point with some emphasis, as an unjust and wholly unfounded impression seems to be gaining ground that Macaulay was a mere closet orator, who delivered carefully prepared essays in the House of Commons, brilliant, perhaps, but unpractical rhetorical exercises that smelt strongly of the lamp. The truth is that Macaulay is never less rhetorical, in the bad sense of the word, than in his speeches. He put on no gloves, he took in hand no buttoned foil, when on well-chosen occasions he came down to the House to make a speech. Blows straight from the shoulder; a short and sharp Roman sword, wielded with equal skill and vigour, are rather the images suggested by his performance in these conflicts. Yet a hundred persons know his essays for

one who is acquainted with his speeches. During the period comprised in this chapter—from 1841 to 1848—he made twelve speeches; and if the world's judgments were dictated by reason and insight instead of fashion and hearsay, no equal portion of Macaulay's works would be deemed so valuable. It is no exaggeration to say that as an orator he moves in a higher intellectual plane than he does as a writer. As a writer he rather avoids the discussion of principles, and is not always happy when he does engage in it. In his speeches we find him nearly without exception laying down broad, luminous principles, based upon reason, and those boundless stores of historical illustration, from which he argues with equal brevity and force. It is interesting to compare his treatment of the same subject in an essay and a speech. His speech on the Maynooth grant and his essay on Mr. Gladstone's *Church and State* deal with practically the same question, and few persons would hesitate to give the preference to the speech.

It is difficult to give really representative extracts from Macaulay's speeches, for the reason that they are so organically constructed that the proverbial inadequacy of the brick to represent the building applies to them in an unusual degree. Many of the speeches also refer to topics and party politics which are rapidly passing into oblivion. One subject, to our sorrow, retains a perennial interest: Macaulay's speeches on Ireland would alone suffice to place him in the rank of high, far-seeing statesmen. The lapse of well-nigh forty years has not aged this melancholy retrospect. He is speaking of Pitt's intended legislation at the time of the Union:

"Unhappily, of all his projects for the benefit of Ireland, the Union alone was carried into effect; and, therefore, that Union was

a Union only in name. The Irish found that they had parted with at least the name and show of independence; and that for this sacrifice of national pride they were to receive no compensation. The Union, which ought to have been associated in their minds with freedom and justice, was associated only with disappointed hopes and forfeited pledges. Yet it was not even then too late. It was not too late in 1813. It was not too late in 1821. It was not too late in 1825. Yes, if even in 1825 some men who were then, as they are now, high in the service of the Crown could have made up their minds to do what they were forced to do four years later, that great work of reconciliation which Mr. Pitt had meditated might have been accomplished. The machinery of agitation was not yet fully organized. The Government was under no strong pressure; and therefore concession might still have been received with thankfulness. That opportunity was suffered to escape, and it never returned.

"In 1829, at length, concessions were made, were made largely, were made without the conditions which Mr. Pitt would undoubtedly have demanded, and to which, if demanded by Mr. Pitt, the whole body of Roman Catholics would have eagerly assented. But those concessions were made reluctantly, made ungraciously, made under duress, made from mere dread of civil war. How, then, was it possible that they should produce contentment and repose? What could be the effect of that sudden and profuse liberality following that long and obstinate resistance to the most reasonable demands, except to teach the Irishman that he could obtain redress only by turbulence? Could he forget that he had been, during eight-and-twenty years, supplicating Parliament for justice, urging those unanswerable arguments which prove that the rights of conscience ought to be held sacred, claiming the performance of promises made by ministers and princes, and that he had supplicated, argued, claimed the performance of promises in vain? Could he forget that two generations of the most profound thinkers, the most brilliant wits, the most eloquent orators, had written and spoken for him in vain? Could he forget that the greatest statesmen who took his part had paid dear for their generosity? Mr. Pitt had endeavored to redeem his pledge, and he was driven from office. Lord Grey and Lord Grenville endeavored to do but a small part of what Mr. Pitt thought right and expedient, and they were driven from office. Mr. Canning took the same side, and his reward was to be worried to death by

the party of which he was the brightest ornament. At length, when he was gone, the Roman Catholics began to look, not to the cabinets and parliaments, but to themselves. They displayed a formidable array of physical force, and yet kept within, just within, the limits of the law. The consequence was that, in two years, more than any prudent friend had ventured to demand for them was granted to them by their enemies. Yes; within two years after Mr. Canning had been laid in the transept near us, all that he would have done—and more than he could have done—was done by his persecutors. How was it possible that the whole Roman Catholic population of Ireland should not take up the notion that, from England, or at least from the party which then governed and which now governs England, nothing is to be got by reason, by entreaty, by patient endurance, but everything by intimidation? That tardy repentance deserved no gratitude, and obtained none. The whole machinery of agitation was complete, and in perfect order. The leaders had tasted the pleasures of popularity; the multitude had tasted the pleasures of excitement. Both the demagogue and his audience felt a craving for the daily stimulant. Grievances enough remained, God knows, to serve as pretexts for agitation; and the whole conduct of the Government had led the sufferers to believe that by agitation alone could any grievance be removed."[1]

As a specimen of Macaulay's power of invective, his attack on Sir Robert Peel may be quoted. After Peel's death, when revising his speeches for publication, he recalled in his diary the impression he had made. "How white poor Peel looked while I was speaking! I remember the effect of the words, 'There you sit,' etc."

"There is too much ground for the reproaches of those who, having, in spite of a bitter experience, a second time trusted the Right Honourable Baronet, now find themselves a second time deluded. It has been too much his practice, when in Opposition, to make use of passions with which he has not the slightest sympathy, and of prejudices which he regards with a profound contempt. As soon as he is

[1] On the State of Ireland, February, 1844.

in power a change takes place. The instruments which have done his work are flung aside. The ladder by which he has climbed is kicked down. . . . Can we wonder that the eager, honest, hot-headed Protestants, who raised you to power in the confident hope that you would curtail the privileges of the Roman Catholics, should stare and grumble when you propose to give public money to the Roman Catholics? Can we wonder that the people out-of-doors should be exasperated by seeing the very men who, when we were in office, voted against the old grant of Maynooth, now pushed and pulled into the House by your whippers-in to vote for an increased grant? The natural consequences follow. All those fierce spirits whom you hallooed on to harass us now turn round and begin to worry you. The Orangeman raises his war-whoop; Exeter Hall sets up its bray; Mr. Macneill shudders to see more costly cheer than ever provided for the Priest of Baal at the table of the Queen; and the Protestant operatives of Dublin call for impeachments in exceedingly bad English. But what did you expect? Did you think when, to serve your turn, you called the devil up that it was as easy to lay him as to raise him? Did you think when you went on, session after session, thwarting and reviling those whom you knew to be in the right, and flattering all the worst passions of those whom you knew to be in the wrong, that the day of reckoning would never come? It has come. There you sit, doing penance for the disingenuousness of years. If it be not so, stand up manfully and clear your fame before the House and country. Show us that some steady policy has guided your conduct with respect to Irish affairs. Show us how, if you are honest in 1845, you can have been honest in 1841. Explain to us why, after having goaded Ireland to madness for the purpose of ingratiating yourselves with the English, you are now setting England on fire for the purpose of ingratiating yourselves with the Irish. Give us some reason which shall prove that the policy you are following, as Ministers, is entitled to support, and which shall not equally prove you to have been the most factious and unprincipled Opposition that ever this country saw."[1]

But the time was approaching when these brilliant passages of arms needed to be brought to a close. Through

[1] Speech on Maynooth, April, 1845.

manifold impediments and hinderances, Macaulay had slowly proceeded with his *History of England;* and he felt what most workers have experienced, that the attractive power of his work increased with its growth. In 1844 he gave up writing for the *Edinburgh Review*, a wise, though somewhat late, resolution, which he would have done well to make earlier. In 1847 he lost his seat for Edinburgh, and thus was severed the last tie which connected him with active politics. He then settled down with steady purpose to finish his task; and on November 29, 1848, the work was given to the world. Not since the publication of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*, nearly three-quarters of a century before, has any historical work been received with such universal acclamation. The first edition of three thousand copies was exhausted in ten days; and in less than four months thirteen thousand copies were sold. The way in which Macaulay was affected by this overwhelming success showed that he was wholly free from any taint of pride or arrogance. "I am half afraid," he wrote in his journal, "of this strange prosperity. . . . I feel extremely anxious about the second part. Can it possibly come up to the first?"

We have now to consider the work in which, for many years, he had "garnered up" his heart.

CHAPTER V.

THE "HISTORY."

"HISTORY," says Macaulay, at the commencement of the *Essay on Hallam*, "at least in its state of ideal perfection, is a compound of poetry and philosophy. It impresses general truths on the mind, by a vivid representation of particular characters and incidents. But in fact the two hostile elements of which it consists have never been known to form a perfect amalgamation; and at length, in our own time, they have been completely and professedly separated. Good histories, in the proper sense of the word, we have not. But we have good historical romances and good historical essays."

The reconciliation of these two hostile elements of history was the dream of Macaulay's early ambition and the serious occupation of his later years. It will be worth while to briefly consider the problem itself before we contemplate the success and skill which he brought to bear on its solution.

The two sides or the two elements of history—the element of fact, and the element of art, which fashions the fact into an attractive form—have always been too obvious to be overlooked. In the earliest form of history—poetry and legend—the element of fact is reduced to a minimum, and almost completely overpowered by the element of art,

which moulds fact without restraint. The growth of civic life partly redresses the balance: the need of accurate record of facts is felt, and first bald annals, and then history in the common sense of the word, make their appearance. The relative proportion of the two ingredients was never carefully determined, but left to the taste and genius of individual writers. On the whole, however, the artistic element long maintained the upper hand. The search for facts, even when acknowledged as a duty, was perfunctory, and the main object of historians was to display their talent in drawing pictures of the past, in which imagination had a larger share than reality. The masters of this artistic form of history are the four great ancients, two Greek and two Roman—Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus—who have never been, and are in little danger of being, surpassed. The moderns for a long time only copied the ancients in history, as in all other departments. Considering his opportunities and easy access to original authorities, Hume is hardly a more careful inquirer than Livy: an attractive narrative in a pure style was the main object of both.

But towards the end of the last century history received a new impulse. The complicated structure of society began to be dimly surmised; political economy introduced a greater precision into the study of certain social questions; and the enlarged view thus gained of the present was soon extended to the past. The French Revolution, revealing as it did the unsuspected depth of social stratification, accelerated a movement already begun. In the early part of the present century history was studied with new eyes. It was seen that it must all be written over again—that the older writers had seen little more than the surface, and were only surveyors, whereas geologists were

wanted who could penetrate to greater depths. In short, the past began to be scientifically examined, not for artistic purposes, in order to compose graceful narratives—not for political purposes, in order to find materials for party warfare—not for theoretical purposes, in order to construct specious but ephemeral philosophies of history; but simply for accurate and verifiable knowledge. It was a repetition of the process through which previous sciences had passed from the pursuit of chimerical to real and valid aims—the study of the heavens from astrology to astronomy, the study of the constituents of bodies from alchemistry to chemistry, the study of medicine from the search for the *elixir vitæ* to serious therapeutics. The result was to depress, and almost degrade, the artistic element in history. When the magnitude and severity of the task before men was at last fully perceived—when it was seen that we have to study the historical record as we study the geological record — that while both are imperfect, full of gaps which may never be filled up, yet enough remains to merit and demand the most thorough examination, classification, and orderly statement of the phenomena we have—it was felt there was something trivial and unworthy of the gravity of science to think of tricking out in the flowers of rhetoric the hardly-won acquisitions of laborious research. Poetical science and scientific poetry are equally repellent to the genuine lovers of both. Simple, unornate statement of the results obtained is the only style of treatment consonant with the dignity of genuine inquiry.

Macaulay passed his youth and early manhood, during the period when this great change was taking place, in historical studies, and producing its first fruits. But it did not find favour in his eyes. Very much the contrary: it filled him with something like disgust. Instead of

yielding to the new movement, he resolved to ignore it, and even by his practice to oppose it. Though the two elements of history had never yet been amalgamated with success, and were about, perhaps, to be severed forever, he thought he could unite them as they had never been united before. He took, as we have seen (chap. ii.), no notice of the new history, showed no curiosity in what was being done in that direction, and nursing his own thoughts in almost complete isolation amid contemporary historians, conceived and matured his own plan of how history should be written. He has left us in no doubt as to what that plan was. It was that history should be a *true novel*, capable of "interesting the affections, and presenting pictures to the imagination. . . . It should invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory; call up our ancestors before us with all their peculiarities of language, manners, and garb; show us over their houses, seat us at their tables, rummage their old-fashioned wardrobes, explain the uses of their ponderous furniture." And that this plan, made in youth, was carried out in after-life with rare success and felicity, his *History* is here to show. Thus, just at the time when history was taking a more scientific and impersonal character, Macaulay was preparing to make it more concrete and individual, to invest it with more flesh and blood, and make it more capable of stirring the affections. He was not a progressist, or even a conservative, but a reactionary in his notions of history. But originality may be shown (sometimes is more shown) in going back as well as in going forward. Those are by no means the strongest minds which most readily yield to the prevailing fashion of their age. Macaulay showed a lofty self-confidence and sense of power when he resolved to at-

tempt a task which he owned had never been accomplished before—nay, to confer on artistic history a rank and dignity which it never had previously enjoyed, at a time when a formidable rival was threatening to depress, or even to depose it altogether.

His plan led, or rather forced him, to work on a scale of unprecedented magnitude, which, even in spite of his example, has never been quite equalled. To produce the effects he required, extreme minuteness of detail was indispensable; characters must be painted life-size, events related with extraordinary fulness, and the history of a nation treated in a style proper to memoirs, or even to romances. The human interest had to be sustained by biographical anecdotes, and a vigilant liveliness of narrative which simulated the novel of adventure. The political interest was to be kept up by similar handling of party debates, party struggles, by one who knew by experience every inch of the ground. But the true historical and sociological interest necessarily retreated into a secondary rank. An ordnance map cannot serve the purpose of a hand atlas. On the scale of an inch to a mile we may trace the roads and boundaries of our parish; but we cannot combine with such minuteness a synthetic view of the whole island and its relation to European geography. It was on the scale of an ordnance map that Macaulay wrote his *History of England.* Such a plan necessarily excluded as much on the one hand as it admitted on the other. Our view of the past is vitiated and wrong, unless a certain proportion presides over our conception of it. The most valuable quality of history is to show the process of social growth; and the longer the period over which this process is observed, the more instructive is the result. A vivid perception of a short period, with imperfect grasp of what

preceded and followed it, is rather misleading than instructive. It leads to a confusion of the relative importance of the part as compared to the whole.

It is, perhaps, a low-minded objection to Macaulay's conception of history, to remark that its application to lengthy periods is a physical impossibility. The five volumes we have of his *History* comprise a space of some fifteen years. It was his original scheme to bring his narrative down to the end of the reign of George IV., in round numbers a period of a century and a half. If, therefore, his plan had been carried out on its present scale, it would have needed fifty volumes, if not more, as it is highly improbable that more recent events would have permitted greater compression. But further, he wrote, at an average, a volume in three years; therefore his whole task would have taken him one hundred and fifty years to accomplish—that is to say, it would have taken as long to record the events as the events took to happen. This is almost a practical refutation of the method he adopted. And yet such an absurd result could not, on his principles, be avoided. If history is to be written in such minute detail that it shall rival the novel in unbroken sustention of the personal interest attaching to the characters, unexampled bulk must ensue. Macaulay had no intention of being so prolix. He expected to achieve the first portion of his plan (down to the commencement of Walpole's administration), a matter of thirty-five years, in five volumes; and, as it turned out, five volumes only carried him over fifteen years. But he could not afford to reduce his scale without sacrificing his conception of how history should be written.

What was the new and original element in Macaulay's treatment of history? The unanimous verdict of his con-

temporaries was to the effect that he *had* treated history in a novel way. He was himself satisfied that he had improved on his predecessors. "There is merit, no doubt," he says, in his diary, "in Hume, Robertson, Voltaire, and Gibbon. Yet it is not the thing. I have a conception of history more just, I am confident, than theirs." Self-conceit was no vice of Macaulay's; and as on this point of his originality he persuaded all the reading world of his time to adopt his opinion, our business is to find out in what his originality consisted. What it amounts to, or may be intrinsically worth, will be considered afterwards.

If we take to pieces one of his massive chapters with a view to examine his method, we shall find that his self-confidence was not without foundation. Historical narrative in his hands is something vastly more complex and involved than it ever was before. Indeed, "narrative" is a weak and improper word to express the highly organized structure of his composition. Beneath the smooth and polished surface layer under layer may be seen of subordinate narratives, crossing and interlacing each other like the parts in the score of an oratorio. And this complexity results not in confusion, but in the most admirable clearness and unity of effect. His pages are not only pictorial, they are dramatic. Scene is made to follow scene with the skill of an accomplished playwright; and each has been planned and fashioned with a view to its thoughtfully prepared place in the whole piece. The interest of the story as a story is kept up with a profound and unsuspected art. The thread of the narrative is never dropped. When transitions occur—and no writer passes from one part of his subject to another with more boldness and freedom—they are managed with such skill and ease that the reader is unaware of them. A turn of the road has brought us in

view of a new prospect; but we are not conscious for a moment of having left the road. The change seems the most natural thing in the world. Let the more remarkable chapters be examined from this point of view—say, simply for example, the Ninth, the Fifteenth, and the Twentieth—and then let the most adverse critic be asked to name an instance in which the art of historical composition has been carried to a higher perfection.

In short, Macaulay was a master of the great art of *mise en scène* such as we never had before. It is rather a French than an English quality, and has been duly appreciated in France. Michelet praises Macaulay in warm terms, speaks of him as "*illustre et regretté*," and of his "*très beau récit.*" If he must be considered as an historical artist who, on the whole, has no equal, the fact is not entirely owing to the superiority of his genius, unmistakable as that was. No historian before him ever regarded his task from the same point of view, or aimed with such calm patience and labour at the same result; no one, in short, had ever so resolved to treat real events on the lines of the novel or romance. Many writers before Macaulay had done their best to be graphic and picturesque, but none ever saw that the scattered fragments of truth could, by incessant toil directed by an artistic eye, be worked into a mosaic, which for colour, freedom, and finish, might rival the creations of fancy. The poets who have written history—Voltaire, Southey, Schiller, Lamartine—are not comparable to Macaulay as historical artists. They did not see that facts recorded in old books, if collected and sorted with unwearied pains, might be made to produce effects nearly as striking and brilliant as the facts they invented for the works of their imagination. Macaulay saw that the repertory of truth was hardly less extensive than the repertory of fic-

tion. If the biography of every character is known with the utmost detail, it will be possible, when each presents himself in the narrative, to introduce him with a fulness of portraiture such as the novelist applies to the hero and heroine of his romance. Exhaustive knowledge of the preceding history of every place named, enables the writer to sketch the castle, the town, or the manor-house with opportune minuteness and local colour. Above all, a narrative built on so large a scale that it allows absolutely unlimited copiousness of facts and illustration, can be ordered with that regard to the interest of the story as a story that the universal curiosity in human adventure is awakened which produces the constant demand for works of fiction. Macaulay saw this, and carried out his conception with a genius and patient diligence which, when our attention is fully called to the point, fill the mind with something like amazement. It is probable that no historian ever devoted such care to the grouping of his materials. He replanned and rewrote whole chapters with ungrudging toil. "I worked hard," he says in his diary, "at altering the arrangement of the first three chapters of the third volume. What labour it is to make a tolerable book; and how little readers know how much trouble the ordering of parts has cost the writer." Again: "This is a tough chapter. To make the narrative flow along as it ought, each part naturally springing from that which precedes, is not easy. What trouble these few pages have cost me. The great object is that they may read as if they had been spoken off, and seem to flow as easily as table-talk." Any one who knows by experience how difficult it is to conduct a wide, complex narrative with perspicuity and ease, and then observes the success with which Macaulay has conquered the difficulty, will be apt to fall into a mute admiration

almost too deep for praise. In the "ordering of parts," which cost him so much labour, his equal will not easily be found. Each side of the story is brought forward in its proper time and place, and leaves the stage when it has served its purpose, that of advancing by one step the main action. Each of these subordinate stories, marked by exquisite finish, leads up to a minor crisis or turn in events, where it joins the chief narrative with a certain *éclat* and surprise. The interweaving of these well-nigh endless threads, the clearness with which each is kept visible and distinct, and yet is made to contribute its peculiar effect and colour to the whole texture, constitute one of the great feats in literature.

Imperfectly as a notion of such constant and pervading merit can be conveyed by an extract, one is offered here merely as an example. But a passage from Hume, dealing with the same events, will be given first. An interesting comparison—or, rather, contrast—between the styles of the earlier and later writer will be found to result. The subject is the flight of the Princess Anne at the crisis of her father's fortunes. Hume says:

"But Churchill had prepared a still more mortal blow for his distressed benefactor. His lady and he had an entire ascendant over the family of Prince George of Danemark; and the time now appeared seasonable for overwhelming the unhappy King, who was already staggering with the violent shocks which he had received. Andover was the first stage of James's retreat towards London, and there Prince George, together with the young Duke of Ormond, Sir George Huet, and some other persons of distinction, deserted him in the night-time, and retired to the Prince's camp. No sooner had this news reached London than the Princess Anne, pretending fear of the King's displeasure, withdrew herself in company with the Bishop of London and Lady Churchill. She fled to Nottingham, where the Earl of Dorset received her with great respect, and the gentry of the country quickly formed a troop for her protection."

This is Macaulay's account:

"Prince George and Ormond were invited to sup with the King at Andover. The meal must have been a sad one. The King was overwhelmed by his misfortunes. His son-in-law was the dullest of companions. 'I have tried Prince George sober,' said Charles the Second, 'and I have tried him drunk; and drunk or sober, there is nothing in him.' Ormond, who was through life taciturn and bashful, was not likely to be in high spirits at such a moment. At length the repast terminated. The King retired to rest. Horses were in waiting for the Prince and Ormond, who, as soon as they left the table, mounted and rode off. They were accompanied by the Earl of Drumlanrig, eldest son of the Duke of Queensberry. The defection of this young nobleman was no insignificant event; for Queensberry was the head of the Protestant Episcopalians of Scotland, a class compared with whom the bitterest English Tories might be called Whiggish; and Drumlanrig himself was lieutenant-colonel of Dundee's regiment of horse, a band more detested by the Whigs than even Kirke's lambs. This fresh calamity was announced to the King on the following morning. He was less disturbed by the news than might have been expected. The shock which he had undergone twenty-four hours before had prepared him for almost any disaster; and it was impossible to be seriously angry with Prince George, who was hardly an accountable being, for having yielded to the arts of such a tempter as Churchill. 'What!' said James, 'is Est-il-possible gone too? After all, a good trooper would have been a greater loss.' In truth, the King's whole anger seems at this time to have been concentrated, and not without cause, on one object. He set off for London, breathing vengeance against Churchill, and learned on arriving a new crime of the arch-deceiver. The Princess Anne had been some hours missing."

Observe the art with which the flight of the princess has been kept back till it can be revealed with startling effect. The humorous story continues:

"Anne, who had no will but that of the Churchills, had been induced by them to notify under her own hand to William, a week before, her approbation of his enterprise. She assured him that she was entirely in the hands of her friends, and that she would remain

in the palace or take refuge in the city as they might determine. On Sunday, 25th November, she and those who thought for her were under the necessity of coming to a sudden resolution. That afternoon a courier from Salisbury brought tidings that Churchill had disappeared, and that he had been accompanied by Grafton, that Kirke had proved false, and that the royal forces were in full retreat. There was, as usually happened when great news, good or bad, arrived in town, an immense crowd that evening in the gallery of Whitehall. Curiosity and anxiety sate on every face. The Queen broke forth into natural expressions of indignation against the chief traitor, and did not altogether spare his too partial mistress. The sentinels were doubled round that part of the palace which Anne occupied. The princess was in dismay. In a few hours her father would be at Westminster. It was not likely that he would treat her personally with severity; but that he would permit her any longer to enjoy the society of her friend was not to be hoped. It could hardly be doubted that Sarah would be placed under arrest, and would be subjected to a strict examination by shrewd and rigorous inquisitors. Her papers would be seized; perhaps evidence affecting her life would be discovered; if so, the worst might well be dreaded. The vengeance of the implacable King knew no distinction of sex. For offences much smaller than those which might be brought home to Lady Churchill he had sent women to the scaffold and the stake. Strong affection braced the feeble mind of the princess. There was no tie which she would not break, no risk which she would not run, for the object of her idolatrous affection. 'I will jump out of the window,' she cried, 'rather than be found here by my father.' The favourite undertook to manage an escape. She communicated in all haste with some of the chiefs of the conspiracy. In a few hours everything was arranged. That evening Anne retired to her chamber as usual. At dead of night she rose, and accompanied by her friend Sarah and two other female attendants, stole down the back stairs in a dressing-gown and slippers. The fugitive gained the open street unchallenged. A hackney-coach was in waiting for them there. Two men guarded the humble vehicle; one of them was Compton, Bishop of London, the princess's old tutor; the other was the magnificent and accomplished Dorset, whom the extremity of the public danger had aroused from his luxurious repose. The coach drove to Aldersgate Street, where the town residence of the bishops of London then stood, within the shadow of their

cathedral. There the princess passed the night. On the following morning she set out for Epping Forest. In that wild tract Dorset possessed a venerable mansion, which has long since been destroyed. In his hospitable dwelling, the favourite resort of wits and poets, the fugitives made a short stay. They could not safely attempt to reach William's quarters, for the road thither lay through a country occupied by the royal forces. It was therefore determined that Anne should take refuge with the northern insurgents. Compton wholly laid aside for the time his sacerdotal character. Danger and conflict had rekindled in him all the military ardour which he had felt twenty-eight years before, when he rode in the Life Guards. He preceded the princess's carriage in a buff coat and jackboots, with a sword at his side, and pistols in his holsters. Long before she reached Nottingham she was surrounded by a body-guard of gentlemen who volunteered to escort her. They invited the bishop to act as their colonel, and he assented with an alacrity which gave great scandal to rigid Churchmen, and did not much raise his character even in the opinion of Whigs."

Reserving the question whether history gains or loses by being written in this way—a most important reservation—it must be allowed that of its kind this is nearly as good as it can be. The sprightly vivacity of the scene is worthy of any novel, yet it is all a mosaic of actual fact. We may call it Richardson grafted on Hume.

Passages like these, as every reader knows, are incessant in Macaulay's *History*, and have been the foundation of a common charge of "excess of ornament." In this there seems to be some misconception, or even confusion of mind, on the part of those who bring the accusation. It is obviously open to us to object to this mode of treating history altogether. We may say that to recount the history of a great state in a sensational style befitting the novel of adventure is a mistaken proceeding. But this objection eliminates Macaulay's *History* from the pale of toleration. According to his scheme such passages are

not mere ornament, but part and parcel of the whole structure; to remove them would not be to remove mere excrescences, but a large portion of the substance as well. We must make our choice between two styles of history —the one in which the interest centres round human characters, and the other in which it centres round the growth and play of social forces. Perhaps the two may very well exist side by side—perhaps not; but in any case we cannot with fairness employ the principles of the one to criticise the methods of the other. Macaulay wittingly, and after mature thought, adopted the style we know, and carried it out with a sumptuous pomp that has never been surpassed. His ornament, it will be generally found, is no idle embellishment, stuck on with vulgar profusion in obedience to a faulty taste, but structurally useful parts of the building, supporting, according to size and position, a due share of the weight; or, in other words, mere additional facts for which he is able to find a fitting place. Take, for instance, this little vignette of Monmouth and the Princess of Orange:

"The duke had been encouraged to hope that in a very short time he would be recalled to his native land and restored to all his high honours and commands. Animated by such expectations, he had been the life of the Hague during the late winter. He had been the most conspicuous figure at a succession of balls in that splendid Orange hall which blazes on every side with the most ostentatious coloring of Jordaens and Hondthorst. He had taught the English country-dance to the Dutch ladies, and had in his turn learned from them to skate on the canals. The princess had accompanied him in his expeditions on the ice; and the figure which she made there, poised on one leg, and clad in petticoats shorter than are generally worn by ladies so strictly decorous, had caused some wonder and mirth to the foreign ministers. The sullen gravity which had been characteristic of the Stadtholder's court seemed to have vanished before the influ-

ence of the fascinating Englishman. Even the stern and pensive William relaxed into good-humour when his brilliant guest appeared."

Will any one say that this is idle and redundant ornament? Could the two men who came to deliver England from the dull folly of James II. be more clearly and rapidly sketched, and the failure of the one and the success of the other more suggestively traced back to the difference of their respective characters?

A similar remark applies to the careful and elaborate portraits by which all the chief and most of the secondary characters are introduced. They have been much blamed —and with reason—by those whose notions of history are opposed to Macaulay's. It must be admitted also that he had not a quick eye for character, and little of that skill which sketches in a few strokes the memorable features of a face or a mind. Still, from his point of view such portraits were quite legitimate, and it cannot be denied that in their way they are often admirably done. They overflow with knowledge, they convey in it an attractive form, and they are inserted with great art just when they are wanted. Even their length, which sometimes must be pronounced excessive, never seems to interfere with the action of the story. In such an extensive gallery it is difficult to make a selection. Perhaps the twentieth chapter, containing the fine series of portraits of Sunderland, Russell, Somers, Montague, Wharton, and Harley, may be named as among the most remarkable. Taken altogether they occupy more than twenty pages. An important subject—the first formation of a Ministry in the modern sense of the word—is dropped for the purpose of introducing them, yet so skilful is the handling that we are conscious of no confusing interruption. This merit distin-

guishes Macaulay's illustrations, and even digressions, almost invariably. They never seem to be digressions. Instead of quenching the interest, they heighten it; and after his widest excursions he brings the reader back to the original point with a curiosity more keen then ever in the main story. Greater evidence of power could hardly be given.

In criticising Macaulay's *History* we should ever bear in mind it is after all only a fragment, though a colossal fragment. We have only a small portion of the edifice that he had planned in his mind. History, which has so many points of contact with architecture, resembles it also in this, that in both impressiveness largely depends on size. A few arches can give no adequate notion of the long colonnade. Of Macaulay's work we have, so to speak, only a few arches. It is true that he built on such a scale that the full completion of his design was beyond the limited span of one man's life and power. But had he lived ten or fifteen years longer—as he well might, and then not have exceeded the age of several of his great contemporaries, Hallam, Thiers, Guizot, Michelet, Ranke, Carlyle—and carried on his work to double or treble its present length, it is difficult to exaggerate the increased grandeur which would have resulted. Such a structure, so spacious and lofty, required length for harmonious proportion. As it is, the *History of England* reminds one of the unfinished cathedral of Beauvais. The ornate and soaring choir wants the balance of a majestic nave, and the masterpiece of French Gothic is deprived of its proper rank from mere incompleteness.

Unfortunately, the *History* can be reproached with more serious faults than incompleteness. The most common objections are the unfair party-spirit supposed to pervade

the book, and its strange inaccuracies as to matters of fact.

The accusation of party-spirit seems on the whole to be unfounded, and we may suspect is chiefly made by those whose own prejudices are so strong that they resent impartiality nearly as much as hostility. He that is not with them is against them. Macaulay, when he wrote his *History*, had ceased to be a party man as regards contemporary politics, and in his work he is neither a Whig nor a Tory but a Williamite. He over and over condemns the Whigs in unqualified terms, and he always does justice to the really upright and high-minded Tories. The proof of this will be found in the warmth of his eulogy and admiration for eminent nonjurors, such as Bishop Ken and Jeremy Collier. As clergymen and uncompromising Tories they would have been equally repugnant to him, if party-spirit had governed his sympathies to the extent supposed. The fact is that there are few characters mentioned in the whole course of his *History* of whom he speaks in such warm, almost such enthusiastic, praise. Of the sainted Bishop of Wells he writes with a reverence which is not a common sentiment with him for anybody. Of the author of a *Short View of the English Stage* he is likely to be thought by those who have read that book to speak with excessive eulogy. But he considered them very justly to be thoroughly upright and conscientious men, and for such, it must be admitted, he had a very partial feeling. It would not be easy to show that he has ever been unjust or at all unfair to the Tories as a party or as individuals. He blames them freely; but so he blames the Whigs. The real origin of this charge of party-spirit may probably be traced to the unfavourable impression he conveys of the house of Stuart. The senti-

mental Jacobitism fostered by Scott and others took offence at his treatment of the king of the Cavaliers and his two sons. But is he unfair, or even unduly severe? If ever a dynasty of princes was condemned, and deserved condemnation, at the bar of history, it was that perverse and incompetent race, who plotted and carried out their own destruction with a perseverance which other sovereigns have brought to the consolidation of their power. Are impartial foreigners, such as Ranke and Gneist, less severe? On the contrary. "Another royal family," says the latter, "could hardly be named which has shown on the throne in an equal degree such a total want of all sense of kingly duty." Nay, we have what some persons will consider the highest authority pronouncing in Macaulay's favour. We read in his diary of March 9, 1850: "To dinner at the palace. The Queen was most gracious to me. She talked much about my book, and owned she had nothing to say for her poor ancestor James II." One can understand a preference for arbitrary power; one can appreciate an admiration for the heroic Strafford. But Charles I. and James II. were mere blunderers, whose lust for power was only equalled by their inability to use it.

With regard to individuals the case is different. He allowed himself to cultivate strong antipathies towards a number of persons—statesmen, soldiers, men of letters—in the past, and he pursued them with a personal animosity which could hardly have been exceeded if they had crossed him in the club or the House of Commons. He conceived a contemptuous view of their characters; his strong historical imagination gave them the reality of living beings, whom he was always meeting "in the corridors of Time," and each encounter embittered his hostility. Marlborough, Penn, and Dundee (in his *History*),

Boswell, Impey, and Walpole (in his *Essays*), always more or less stir his bile, and his prejudice leads him into serious inaccuracies. One naturally seeks to inquire what may have been the cause of such obliquity in a man who was never, by enmity itself, accused of wanting generous feelings, and whom it is almost impossible to suspect of conscious unfairness. The truth seems to be that Macaulay had, like most eminent men, *les défauts de ses qualités.* One of his qualities was a punctilious regard for truth and straightforward dealing. Another was supreme common sense. The first made him hate and despise knaves, the second made him detest dunces; and he did both with unnecessary scorn—with a sort of donnish and self-righteous complacency which is anything but winning. He made up his mind that Boswell was a pushing, impertinent fool; and for fools he had no mercy. He satisfied himself that Bacon was a corrupt judge; that Impey was an unjust judge; that Marlborough was a base, avaricious time-server; and that Penn was a pompous hypocrite, or something very like it. For such vices he had little or no tolerance, and he was somewhat inclined to lose his head in his anger at them. That in all the cases referred to he showed precipitancy and, what is worse, obstinate persistence in error, unfortunately, cannot be denied. But there was nothing unworthy in his primary impulse. It was a perverted form of the sense of justice to which upright men are sometimes prone, somewhat resembling that arrogance of virtue which misleads good women into harshness towards their less immaculate sisters.

Whatever this plea may be worth, it cannot blind us to the serious breaches of historical fidelity which he has been led to commit. Mr. Paget, in his *New Examen*, has proved beyond question that, with regard to Marlborough and

Penn, Macaulay has been guilty of gross inaccuracy, nay, even perversions of the truth. For details of the evidence the reader must consult Mr. Paget. The miscarriage of the attack on Brest, which Macaulay lays exclusively "on the basest of all the hundred villanies of Marlborough," is shown to have failed through the imprudent valour of Talmash. William and his ministers were well aware that the French knew of the expedition, and had long been prepared to repel it. The King writes, "They were long apprised of our intended attack," and mildly lays the blame on the rashness of his own general. But Macaulay makes it appear that through Marlborough's treachery the English forces went blindly to their own destruction. Expecting to surprise the French, we are told, they found them armed to the teeth, solely in consequence of information sent to James II. by Churchill; hence the failure, and the deaths of Talmash and many brave men, of whom Macaulay does not scruple to call Marlborough the "murderer." It must be owned that this is very serious; and it does not much mend the matter to ascribe, as we surely may, Macaulay's inaccuracy to invincible prejudice, rather than to ignorance or dishonesty. He was thoroughly convinced that Marlborough was a faithless intriguer, which may be quite true; but that was no reason for charging him with crimes which he did not commit. Let it be noticed, however, that the refusal to be dazzled by military glory, and to accept it as a set-off to any moral delinquency, is no vulgar merit in an historian. Mr. Carlyle has been heard to say that Rhadamanthus would certainly give Macaulay four dozen lashes, when he went to the Shades, for his treatment of Marlborough. This is quite in character for the Scotch apostle of "blood and iron." Macaulay could admire military genius when united with magnanimity and public virtue

as warmly as any one. But he could not accept it as a compensation for the want of truth and honour.

His treatment of Penn admits of the same kind of imperfect palliation. He had satisfied himself that the Quaker was, for a time at least, a time-server and a sycophant. And he allowed his disgust at such a character to hurry him into culpable unfairness, which has been exposed by the late Mr. Hepworth Dixon and Mr. W. E. Forster, as well as by Mr. Paget. The animosity with which he pursues Penn — the false colouring amounting, in places, to real misrepresentation, which he gives to actions innocent or laudable, can only excite astonishment and regret. His account of Penn's interference in the dispute between the King and Magdalen College is almost mendacious. He would make it appear that Penn acted merely as a ready and unscrupulous tool of James II. "The courtly Quaker did his best to seduce the College from the right path. He first tried intimidation." (*Hist.*, cap. viii.) Now, nothing is more certain than that it was the College which invoked Penn's mediation with the King. The whole subject is a painful one, and we would gladly leave it. The only inducement we can have to linger over it is the query, What was the chief motive or origin of such historical unfaithfulness? A partial answer to this question has been attempted above—that a wrong-headed species of righteous indignation got possession of the writer's mind, and led him into the evil paths of injustice and untruth. But there was besides another temptation to lead Macaulay astray, to which few historians have been exposed in an equal degree. His plan of assimilating real to fictitious narrative—of writing history on the lines of the novel—obscured or confused his vision for plain fact. His need of lighter and darker shades caused him to make colours when he could not find

them; his necessities as an artist forced him to correct the adverse fortune which had not provided him with the tints which his purpose required. No well-constructed play or novel can dispense with a villain, whose vices throw up in brighter relief the virtues of the hero and the heroine. That he did yield to this temptation we have ample evidence. It caused him to use his authorities in a way that serious history must entirely condemn. Mr. Spedding has shown how freely he deviated into fiction in his libel on Bacon: a molecule of truth serves as a basis for a superstructure of fancy. To Bacon's intellectual greatness a contrast was needed—and it is found partly in the generosity of Essex, and partly in his own supposed moral baseness. A good instance of Macaulay's tendency to pervert his authorities to artistic uses will be found in his account of the dying speech of Robert Francis, who was executed for the alleged murder of Dangerfield, by striking him in the eye with a cane. Repelling a scandalous report that the act had been prompted by jealousy, on the ground of Dangerfield's criminal relations with his wife, Francis declared on the scaffold that he was certain that she had never seen him in her whole life, and added, "Besides that, she is as virtuous a woman as lives; and born of so good and loyal a family, she would have scorned to prostitute herself to such a profligate person." In Macaulay's version this statement is altered and dressed up thus:

> "The dying husband, with an earnestness half ridiculous, half pathetic, vindicated the lady's character; she was, he said, a virtuous woman, she came of a loyal stock, and if she had been inclined to break her marriage vow, would at least have selected a Tory and a Churchman for her paramour."

This is the result of treating history in the style of romance. It is, no doubt, probably true that if the virt-

uous and calumniated Mrs. Francis had permitted herself to have a paramour, he would have been a Tory and a Churchman. But what are we to think of an historian who presents in *oratio obliqua* this poetic probability as the actual assertion of the dying husband?

It is even less easy to account for Macaulay's treatment of the Anglican clergy. No one thing in his *History* gave such deep and permanent offence. It is difficult even to surmise a reason for the line he took. The imperfect excuses which may be pleaded for his injustice to individuals, will not avail in this case. Neither an ill-regulated zeal for virtue, nor the needs of picturesque history, demanded the singular form of depreciation of the English clergy which he has allowed himself. He does not arraign their morality, or their patriotism, or even their culture on the whole—but their social position: they were not gentlemen; they were regarded as on the whole a plebeian class; "for one who made the figure of a gentleman, ten were menial servants." He must have been well aware that such a reflection conveyed an affront which, in our society, would not readily be forgiven. Nor has it been. One frequently meets with persons who will not tolerate a good word for Macaulay; and if the ground of their repugnance is sought for, we generally find it in these remarks upon the clergy. The climax of insult was reached in the aspersion thrown on the wives of clergymen, that they were generally women whose "characters had been blown upon;" and this is based on no better authority than a line in Swift—unusually audacious, cynical, and indecent, even for him. The tone of the whole passage—some eight or ten pages—savours more of satire and caricature than of sober history. Whether that "invincible suspicion of parsons" which Mr Leslie

Stephen declares to be a characteristic of the true Whig, was at the bottom of it, one would not like to say. But few would deny that Macaulay, in his treatment of the Church of England, has more openly yielded to the promptings of party-spirit than in any other portions of his *History*.

Nevertheless, they deceive themselves who think that they can brand Macaulay with the stigma of habitual and pervading unfaithfulness. He does not belong to that select band of writers whose accuracy may be taken for granted—to the class of Bentley, Gibbon, and Bayle—who seem provided with an extra sense which saves them from the shortcomings of other men. He has a share of ordinary human infirmity, but not a large share. He can be prejudiced and incorrect; but these failings are most assuredly the exception, not the rule. Above all, he impresses all impartial judges with a conviction of his honesty. "There never was a writer less capable of intentional unfairness," says Mr. Gladstone, who still is well aware how inaccurate he could be on occasion. His inaccuracy arose from hearty dislike for men of whom he honestly thought ill. Of conscious duplicity and untruth, no one who knows him can conceive him guilty.

We now turn to the reservation made a few pages back, and inquire how far Macaulay's conception of history deserves to be commended in itself, irrespective of the talent with which he put it into execution.

In a letter to Macvey Napier, Macaulay wrote: "I have at last begun my historical labours. . . . The materials for an amusing narrative are immense. I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." We did not need this intimation to make

us acquainted with the chief object which the writer had in view; but it is satisfactory to have it, as now no doubt remains on the subject. This, then, was Macaulay's pole-star, by which he guided his historical argosy over the waters of the past—young ladies for readers, laying down the novel of the season to take up his *History of England.* His star led him to the port for which he steered. But how widely it made him depart from the great ocean highway frequented by ships bound for more daring ventures, it is now our business to examine and show.

The chief objections which may be made against the *History* are the following:

(1.) Want of generalized and synthetic views.

(2.) Excessive diffuseness.

(3.) Deficient historical spirit.

(1.) As a work of art the *History* is so bright and impressive, it appeals so strongly to the imagination, that we do not at first perceive how little it appeals to the reason, or how little it offers by way of enlightenment to the mind. Any page, or even chapter taken at random, is almost sure to charm us by its colour, variety, and interest. But when we read a whole volume, or, still more, the whole work through, pretty rapidly, we become conscious of a great omission. In spite of the amazing skill of the narrative, of the vivid and exciting scenes that are marshalled past us as on some great stage, the reflective faculty finds its interest diminishing; while the eye and the fancy are surfeited with good things, the intellect is sent empty away. It is not easy to retain any definite impression of what the book has taught us. We remember that while reading it we had a most amusing entertainment, that crowds of people in old-fashioned costumes, who took part in exciting scenes, were presented us. But our recol-

lection of the whole resembles very much our recollection of a carnival or a masked ball a few weeks after it is over. Our memory of English history seems to have been at once brightened and confused.

The reason, as Macaulay would have said, is very obvious: while no historian ever surpassed him in the art of brilliantly narrating events, few among the men of mark have been so careless or incapable of classifying them in luminous order, which attracts the attention of the mind. Engrossed with the dramatic and pictorial side of history, he paid little attention to that side which gives expression to general views, which embraces a mass of details in an abstract statement, thereby throwing vastly increased light and interest on the details themselves. He never resumes in large traits the character of an epoch—never traces in clear outline the movement (entwicklungsgang) of a period, showing as on a skeleton map the line of progress. It does not appear that he yielded to the silly notion that abstract history must necessarily be incorrect. All history, unfortunately, is liable to be incorrect, and concrete history as much as any. It is nearly as easy to blunder in summing up the character of a man—as Penn or Marlborough—as in summing up the character of a period. There can be no doubt, however, which is the more valuable and important thing to do. History must become a chaos if its increasing volume and complexity are not lightened and methodized by general and synthetic views. It is in this respect that the modern school of history is so superior to the ancient. We may see this by remarking the errors into which the greatest men formerly fell—from which very small men are now preserved. When we find such a statesman as Machiavelli ascribing the fall of the Roman Empire to the treachery and ambition of Stilicho,

who "contrived that the Burgundians, Franks, Vandals, and Alans should assail the Roman provinces;" when we find such a genius as Montesquieu accounting for the same catastrophe by the imprudent transfer of the seat of empire, which carried all the wealth from Rome to Constantinople; or such a scholar as Gibbon still explaining the same event by the refusal of the Roman legionaries to wear defensive armour, we are able to appreciate the progress that has been made in comprehending the past. Those great men saw nothing absurd in attributing the most momentous social transformation recorded in history to quite trivial and superficial causes. If we know better, it is because the study of society, whether past or present, has made some progress towards scientific shape. This progress was not furthered by Macaulay. He contributed nothing to our intelligence of the past, though he did so much for its pictorial illustration.

For instance. He has not grasped and reproduced in well-weighed general proportions the import and historical meaning of the Stuart period, which was his real object. He has painted many phases of it with almost redundant fulness. But he has not traced the evolution of those ideas and principles which mark its peculiar character. He mentions the "strange theories of Filmer," but instead of pointing out their origin, and the causes of their growth (which was the historical problem) he seriously controverts them from the modern point of view, as if Filmer needed refuting nowadays. He devotes over two pages to this work of supererogation. But if we ask why this notion of divine right rose into such prominence at this particular time, he has nothing to say. He rarely or never *accounts* for a phase of thought, institution, or line of policy, tracing it back to antecedent causes, and showing how,

under the circumstances, it was the natural and legitimate result. What he does is to *describe* it with often wearisome prolixity. He describes the Church of England over and over again from the outside, from a sort of dissenter's point of view; but except the not recondite suggestion that the Church of England was a compromise between the "Church of Rome and the Church of Geneva," he really tells us nothing. This idea of a compromise strikes him as so weighty and important that he develops it with an elaboration which is common with him, and which Mr. Leslie Stephen irreverently calls his zeal "for blacking the chimney." Thus:

"In every point of her system the same policy may be traced. Utterly rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, and condemning as idolatrous all adoration paid to sacramental bread and wine, she yet, to the disgust of the Puritan, required her children to receive the memorials of Divine love meekly kneeling upon their knees. Discarding many rich vestments which surrounded the altars of the ancient faith, she yet retained, to the horror of weak minds, the robe of white linen, which typified the purity which belonged to her as the mystical spouse of Christ. Discarding a crowd of pantomimic gestures, which in the Roman Catholic worship are substituted for intelligible words, she yet shocked many rigid Protestants by marking the infant just sprinkled from the font with the sign of the cross. The Roman Catholic addressed his prayers to a multitude of saints, among whom were numbered many men of doubtful, and some of hateful character. The Puritan refused the addition of saint, even to the apostle of the Gentiles and to the disciple whom Jesus loved. The Church of England, though she asked for the intercession of no created being, still set apart days for the commemoration of some who had done and suffered great things for the faith. She retained confirmation and ordination as edifying rites, but she degraded them from the rank of sacraments. Shrift was no part of her system; yet she gently invited the dying penitent to confess his sins to a divine, and empowered her ministers to soothe the departing soul by an absolution which breathes the very spirit of the old religion. In

general, it may be said that she appeals more to the understanding, and less to the senses and the imagination, than the Church of Rome; and that she appeals less to the understanding, and more to the senses and imagination, than the Protestant churches of Scotland, France, and Switzerland."

There are five pages more of a quality quite up to this sample. Now, the point to be noticed is that this is not history at all. The historian of the seventeenth century is not concerned with what the Church of England is or is not; *but with how she came to be what she was in the days of the Stuarts.* What we want to know is how and why the Puritan bishops of Elizabeth were succeeded in a few years by the High Church bishops of James and Charles? Those who ask these questions must not address themselves to Macaulay. He can only tell them that "the Arminian doctrine spread fast and wide," and that "the infection soon reached the court." Why the transformation of opinion took place he does not attempt to explain. The singular theory which he held as to the inherent unreasonableness of *all* religious opinion—that it was a matter of mere accident and caprice—no doubt seriously hampered him in his treatment of these topics. But it is strange that he was not surprised at his own inability to deal with a whole order of historical phenomena of constant recurrence since Europe became Christian. How differently did Gibbon handle a vastly more difficult theme—the orthodox and heretical dogmas of the early Church.

Even the constitutional side of his subject is neglected, though probably few historians or politicians have known it better or have valued it more. But we look in vain in his pages for a clear exposition, freed from the confusion of details, of the progressive stages of the conflict between

the Crown and the Parliament during the Stuart period—the *momenta* of the struggle set forth in luminous order, showing how a move on one side was answered by a move on the other. In vivid concrete narrative Macaulay has few equals; but in that form of abstract narrative which traces the central idea and energy of a social movement, carefully excluding the disturbing intrusion of particular facts, he showed little aptitude; when he attempts it, he cannot maintain it for long; he falls off into his bright picturesque style. It is not easy to see what purpose Macaulay had in view by writing his first chapter in its present form. A brief and weighty sketch of the growth and progress of the English constitution would have been a worthy preface to his history of the last great struggle for parliamentary government. But he has not attempted anything of the kind. It would not have occurred to every one to review English history from the Saxon times, and not mention once Simon de Montfort's name, nor even refer to the institutions he fostered, except with a vagueness that was utterly unmeaning. The thirteenth century he describes as a "sterile and obscure" portion of our annals. He even does his best to appear guilty of an ignorance with which it is impossible to credit him. Speaking of the Norman Conquest, he says "the talents and even the virtues of the first six French kings were a curse to England; the follies and vices of the seventh were her salvation." And why? Because, "If John had inherited the great qualities of his father, of Henry Beauclerc, or of the Conqueror . . . the house of Plantagenet must have risen to unrivalled ascendency in Europe." Frightful results would have followed. "England would never have had an independent existence . . . the noble language of Milton and Burke would have

remained a rustic dialect, without a literature, a fixed grammar, or a fixed orthography." It is not easy to believe that Macaulay was unaware of the debt that England owed to her vigorous Norman and Angevin kings—that their strong despotism carried our country rapidly through several stages of political development, for which other nations had to wait for centuries. In the same light vein he has a strange paragraph about the "parliamentary assemblies" of Europe, in which he contrasts the failure of parliamentary government on the Continent with its success in England. The reason was that those assemblies were not wise like the English parliament was: they were not sufficiently vigilant and cautious in voting taxes. The policy which they "ought to have adopted was to take their stand firmly on their constitutional right to give or withhold money, and resolutely to refuse funds for the support of armies, till ample securities had been provided against despotism. This wise policy was followed in our country alone." This policy succeeded in England alone; but it was tried repeatedly in France and Spain during several centuries, and if it failed it was certainly not because Frenchmen and Spaniards overlooked its wisdom, but because that unanimity of national life which the Norman Conquest had produced in England was absent in those countries. But Macaulay as an historian cared for none of these things. His morbid dread of dulness made him shrink from them. In this very chapter, where he cannot find space for the most important topics of English history, he readily dilates in his picturesque way on the manners of the Normans during a page and a half.

(2.) As regards his diffuseness there can be but one opinion. The way in which he will go on repeating the

same idea in every form and variation that his vast resources of language enabled him to command is extraordinary to witness. He seems to take as much pains to be redundant and prolix as other men take to be terse and compressed. When he has to tell us that the Reformation greatly diminished the wealth of the Church of England, it costs him two pages to say so.[1] When he has to describe the change that came over Tory opinion after the trial of the seven bishops, he requires six pages to deliver his thought.[2] And this is his habitual manner whenever he depicts the state of religious or political opinion. That it was intentional cannot be doubted; it was his way of "making his meaning pellucid," as he said; which it certainly did, rendering it as clear as distilled water, and about as strong. But it would be rash to assume that it was a mistake from his point of view. The young ladies on whom he had fixed his eye when he began to write had to be considered; a Sallustian brevity of expression would easily drive them back to their novels, and this was a danger to avoid.

(3.) The most serious objection remains, and it is nothing less than this, that he was deficient in the true historic spirit, and often failed to regard the past from the really historical point of view. What is the historical point of view? Is it not this: to examine the growth of society in by-gone times with a single eye for the stages of the process—to observe the evolution of one stage out of another previous stage—to watch the past, as far as our means allow, as we watch any other natural phenomena, with the sole object of recording them accurately? The impartiality of science is absolute. It has no preferences, likes, or dislikes. It considers the lowest and the highest

[1] *History*, cap. iii. [2] *Ibid.*, cap. ix.

forms of life with the same interest and the same zeal; it makes no odious comparisons between lower and higher, between younger and older; but simply observes co-ordinates, in time rising to generalizations and deductions. The last work of the greatest of English biologists was devoted to earth-worms, a subject which earlier science would have treated with scorn. Now, what does Macaulay do in his observation of the past? *He compares it, to its disparagement, with the present.* The whole of his famous third chapter, on the State of England, is one long pæan over the superiority of the nineteenth century to the seventeenth century—as if an historian had the slightest concern with that. Whether we are better or worse than our ancestors is a matter utterly indifferent to scientific history, whose object is to explain and analyze the past, on which the present can no more throw light than the old age of an individual can throw light on his youth. Macaulay's constant preoccupation is not to explain his period by previous periods, but to show how vastly the period of which he treats has been outstripped by the period in which he lives. Whatever may be the topic—the wealth or population of the country, the size and structure of the towns, the roads, the coaches, the lighting of London, it matters not—the comparison always made is with subsequent England, not previous England. His enthusiasm for modern improvements is so sincere that it produces the comical effect of a countryman's open-eyed astonishment at the wonders of Cheapside. Of Manchester he says:

"That wonderful emporium was then a mean, ill-built market-town, containing under six thousand people. It then had not a single press: it now supports a hundred printing establishments. It then had not a single coach: it now supports twenty coach-makers."

Of Liverpool:

"At present Liverpool contains more than three hundred thousand inhabitants. The shipping registered at her port amounts to between four and five hundred thousand tons. Into her custom-house has been repeatedly paid in one year a sum more than thrice as great as the whole income of the English Crown in 1685. The receipts of her post-office, even since the great reduction of the duty, exceed the sum which the postage of the whole kingdom yielded to the Duke of York. Her endless quays and warehouses are among the wonders of the world. Yet even those docks and quays and warehouses seem hardly to suffice for the gigantic trade of the Mersey; and already a rival city is growing fast on the opposite shore."

Of Cheltenham we are told: "Corn grew and cattle browsed over the space now covered by that long succession of streets and villas."

In Tunbridge Wells—

"we see a town which would a hundred and sixty years ago have ranked in population fourth or fifth among the towns of England. The brilliancy of the shops, and the luxury of the private dwellings, far surpasses anything that England could then show."

The list might be indefinitely extended. A word may be added on Macaulay's delight in villas. They were evidently to him one of the most attractive features in a town or a landscape. Contrasting the London of Charles II. with the London of the present day, he says:

"The town did not as now fade by imperceptible degrees into the country. No long avenues of villas, embowered in lilacs and laburnums, extended from the great centre of wealth and civilization almost to the boundaries of Middlesex. . . . On the west, scarcely one of those stately piles of building which are inhabited by the noble and the wealthy was in existence."

Even in the crisis of his hero's fate, when William is about to land at Torbay, he cannot forget to do justice to

his favourite form of domestic architecture. Speaking of Torquay he says:

"The inhabitants are about ten thousand in number. The newly built churches and chapels, the baths and libraries, the hotels and public gardens, the infirmary and museum, the white streets rising terrace above terrace, the gay *villas* peeping from the midst of shrubberies and flower-beds, present a spectacle widely different from any that in the seventeenth century England could show."

Now the serious question is whether the very opposite of the historical spirit and method is not shown in remarks of this kind? Supposing even we share Macaulay's singular partiality for villas—which is the last thing many would be disposed to do—yet what bearing have modern villas on the history of England in the seventeenth century? This is to invert the historical problem; to look at the past through the wrong end of the telescope. The explanation of this singular aberration will probably be found in Macaulay's constant immersion in politics. Many passages of his history have the appearance of fragments of a budget speech setting forth the growth of the country in wealth and population, and consequent capacity to supply an increased revenue. When he answered poor Southey's sentimental dreams about the virtue and happiness of the olden time, he was nearly wholly in the right. But he did not see that this polemical attitude was out of place in history. He became at too early a period in life a serious politician, not to damage his faculty as an historian. Guizot never recovered his historical eye after he was Prime Minister of France, though he lived for nearly thirty years in enforced leisure afterwards. Gibbon and Grote had just as much of politics as an historian can bear, and neither of them remotely equalled Macaulay's participation in public affairs.

CHAPTER VI.

THE END.

MACAULAY seems to have enjoyed almost uninterrupted good and even robust health until he had passed his fiftieth year. Neither his incessant work, nor the trying climate of India, nor the more trying climate of the House of Commons, produced more than temporary indisposition, which he speedily shook off. He was a broad-chested active man, taking a great deal of exercise, which was however almost confined to walking. "He thought nothing of going on foot from the Albany to Clapham, and from Clapham on to Greenwich;" and as late as August, in the year 1851, he mentions in his diary having walked from Malvern to Worcester and back—say sixteen miles. He had the questionable habit of reading during his walks, by which the chief benefit of the exercise both to mind and body is probably lost. The solitary walker is not without his compensations, or even his delights. A peculiarly vivid meditation is kindled in some men by the unfatiguing movement, and a massive grouping and clarifying of ideas is obtained by a long ramble, which could not be reached in the study or at the desk. Rousseau and Wordsworth habitually composed in their walks. They were reading in their own way, but not in the same book as Macaulay. The quantity of printed matter that he could

get through on these occasions was prodigious, and on a lesser authority than his own hardly to be believed. In the walk just mentioned, between Worcester and Malvern, he read no less than fourteen books of the Odyssey. This was only a particular instance of that superabundant energy and pervading over-strenuousness which belonged to the constitution of a mind that was well-nigh incapable of repose and thoughtful brooding. On a journey "his flow of spirits was unfailing—a running fire of jokes, rhymes, puns never ceasing. It was a peculiarity of his that he never got tired on a journey. As the day wore on he did not feel the desire to lie back and be quiet, and he liked to find his companions ready to be entertained to the last."[1] Even when he and his fellow-travellers had gained the timely inn, his overpowering vivacity was not quenched, but he would produce impromptu translations from Greek, Latin, Italian, or Spanish writers, or read selections from Sterne, Smollett, or Fielding, or fall to capping verses or stringing rhymes with his nephew and nieces. His swift energy impressed even strangers as something portentous. A bookseller with whom he dealt informs me that he never had such a customer in his life; that Macaulay would come into his shop, run through shelf after shelf of books, and in less time than some men would take to select a volume, he would order a pile of tomes to be sent off to the Albany.

Whether this life at constant high-pressure was the cause of his health giving way does not appear, but in July, 1852, he was suddenly stricken down by heart disease, which was soon followed by a confirmed asthma. This sudden failure of health seems to have taken him by surprise; but even his own journal shows that he had re-

[1] *Trevelyan*, vol. ii. cap. xi.

ceived warnings which to a man of a more introspective turn would have been full of significance. But the malady declared itself at last with a malignity which even he could not overlook. "I became," he says, "twenty years older in a week. A mile is more to me now than ten miles a year ago." Forty years of incessant labour had done their work.

What follows right up to the closing scene is very touching, and shows that courageous side of Macaulay's nature on which his uniformly prosperous life never made adequate demands. No man probably would have fought a long doubtful uphill fight with more resolute fortitude than he. Had his lot been cast in arduous times, had he been tried by misfortune, or injustice, or persecution, his biography, we may be sure, would have been far more exciting than it is. Though he was the most peaceful of men, he was thoroughly courageous. If he had lived in the times of which he was the historian, he would have stood in the breach either as a soldier or a politician among the bravest: he would have led a forlorn-hope, either civic or military, when other men's hearts were failing them for fear. Physical or political courage of an exceptional kind he was never called upon to show. But the calm, patient endurance with which he supported the slow invasion of a mortal disease, adds another trait to the amiability of a character which was unselfish from first to last. Though well aware of the nature of his illness, he allowed his sister, Lady Trevelyan, the consolation of thinking that he did not know how ill he was. Oppressed as he was with asthma and heart disease, though so weak at times that he could hardly walk even with a stick, he resolutely faced and accomplished his daily "task," and wrote the whole of the fourth and fifth

volumes with undiminished animation and thoroughness. Unfortunately, he was again a member of the House of Commons. The people of Edinburgh had promptly regretted and repented the disgrace they had done themselves by unseating him in 1847 for his sturdy conscientiousness in supporting the Maynooth Grant, and placed him at the head of the poll in the general election of 1852, even after he had haughtily refused to give any pledge, or even to stand for the City. Although his constituents were willing to grant him every indulgence, and his attendance in the House was by no means assiduous, yet he often did attend when prudence would have kept him at home. "We divided twice," he wrote in his diary, "and a very wearisome business it was. I walked slowly home at two in the morning, and got to bed much exhausted. A few such nights will make it necessary for me to go to Clifton again." On another occasion: "I was in pain and very poorly. I went down to the House and paired. On my return, just as I was getting into bed, I received a note from Hayter to say that he had paired me. I was very unwilling to go out at that hour" (it was in January), "and afraid of the night air; but I have a horror of the least suspicion of foul play: so I dressed and went again to the House, settled the matter about the pairs, and came back at near twelve o'clock." The old insatiable appetite for work returned upon him during the intermissions of his malady. He was chairman of the committee which was appointed to consider the proposal to throw open the Indian Civil Service to public competition, and had to draw up the report. "I must and will finish it in a week," he wrote, and was as good as his word.

He made only three speeches during his last four years

in the House, all in the year 1853. The effort was far too great and exhausting to his shattered strength. Yet one of these speeches was a brilliant oratorical triumph, a parallel to his performance on the copyright question, when he defeated a measure which but for his intervention would undoubtedly have been carried. Lord Hotham's bill for the exclusion of Judges from the House of Commons had passed through all stages but the last without a division. Macaulay determined to oppose it, but went down to the House very nervous and anxious about the result. The success was complete, indeed overwhelming. The bill "was not thrown out, but pitched out." But the cost was excessive. Macaulay said he was knocked up; and a journalist who has left an impressive account of the whole scene remarked that he was "trembling when he sat down, and had scarcely the self-possession to acknowledge the eager praises which were offered by the Ministers and others in the neighbourhood."

He was much moved by the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, as one might expect; but on neither was his line of thought or sentiment at all elevated above that of the multitude. An ardent admirer of Lord Palmerston, his patriotism was of the old-fashioned type—of a man who could remember Wellington's campaigns. When travelling on the Continent he was accustomed to say that he liked to think that he was a citizen of no mean city. Indeed, there was a perceptible element of Chauvinism in his composition. The fact calls for no remark; it was quite in harmony with the rest of his character, which at no time betrayed the slightest tendency to press forward to wider and loftier views than those generally popular in his time. Not a doubt seems to have crossed his mind as to the policy or expediency of the Crimean War—

whether it was a wise thing even from a narrowly patriotic point of view. There is nothing to show that he had ever considered or come to any conclusion on the complicated problems of the Eastern question. His dislike of speculation even extended to the domain of politics. It would not be easy to cite from his letters and journals when travelling abroad a single sentence indicating interest in and observation of the laws, institutions, and local conditions of foreign countries. His utterances on the Indian Mutiny can only be read with regret, and show what an insecure guide the most benevolent sentiment may be when unsupported by reasoned principle. He verified Michelet's aphorism, "Qu'il n'y a rien de si cruel que la pitié." In September, 1857, he wrote: "It is painful to be so revengeful as I feel myself. I, who cannot bear to see a beast or a bird in pain, could look on without winking while Nana Sahib underwent all the tortures of Ravaillac. . . . With what horror I used to read in Livy how Fulvius put to death the whole Capuan Senate in the second Punic War! and with what equanimity I could hear that the whole garrison of Delhi, all the Moulavies and Mussulman doctors there, and all the rabble of the bazaar, had been treated in the same way! Is this wrong?" Clearly it was wrong in a man of Macaulay's culture and experience. He might have remembered with what just severity he had branded cruelty in his *History* and *Essays*, with what loathing he had spoken of the Duke of York's delight in witnessing the infliction of torture. One must take the liberty of entirely disbelieving his report of his own feelings, and of thinking that if the matter had been brought to a practical test he would much have preferred being tortured by the Nana to torturing him himself. His tone, however, is curious as

one of the many proofs of the untheoretic cast of his mind. Philosophy was well avenged for the scorn with which he treated her.

The glimpse we catch of Macaulay in these latter years, sitting with his eyes fixed on death, is touching even to strangers; and the reality must have been pathetic and painful beyond words to those who loved him and had ever experienced his boundless affection. He waited for the final summons with entire calmness and self-possession. "I am a little low," he wrote, "but not from apprehension, for I look forward to the inevitable close with perfect serenity, but from regret for what I love. I sometimes hardly command my tears when I think how soon I may leave them." He had also another regret, which might well have been a poignant one—the leaving of his work unfinished; but he refers to it very softly and sweetly: "To-day I wrote a pretty fair quantity of history. I should be glad to finish William before I go. But this is like the old excuses that were made to Charon." As he passed through "the cold gradations of decay" his spirit manifestly rose into a higher range. A self-watching tenderness of conscience appears, of which it would not be easy to find traces before. He was anxious lest the irritability produced by disease should show itself by petulance and want of consideration for others. "But I will take care. I have thought several times of late that the last scene of the play was approaching. I should wish to act it simply, but with fortitude and gentleness united." At last he had been forced to look down into the dark abyss which surrounds life, from which he had hitherto turned away with rather too marked a persistence. His tone of resolute contentedness, before his illness, was apt to be too emphatic. "October 25, 1859.—My birthday. I am fifty

Well, I have had a happy life. I do not know that any one whom I have seen close has had a happier. Some things I regret; but who is better off?" And there are other utterances of a similar kind. He clearly avoided, on principle as well as from inclination, dwelling on the gloomy side of things. It gave him pain to look towards the wastes which skirt human existence, and he found no profit in doing so. When troubles and trials came he knew he could bear them as well as the most; but he felt no call to go and look at them when afar off. He turned to the hearths and hearts warm with human love that he could trust, and willingly forgot the inclemency outside. His contentedness was, no doubt, corroborated by another circumstance, that his illness never apparently was of a gastric kind. He was never inspired by the tenth (demonic) muse of indigestion, the baleful goddess who is responsible for much of the *Weltschmerz* and passionate unrest which has found voice in modern times. But now he is brought face to face with realities which cannot be ignored. For, by one of those fatalities which seem to wait till a man has been brought low before they fall upon him with crushing weight, the beloved sister (Lady Trevelyan), in whom and in whose family for long years he had garnered up his heart, would be compelled in a few months to join her husband in India, where he had been appointed Governor of Madras. "He endured it manfully, and almost silently, but his spirits never recovered the blow."[1] The full anguish of the blow itself he did not live to feel, for he died suddenly and peacefully on the evening of the 28th December, 1859, at Holly Lodge, whither he had removed in 1856, on leaving his chambers

[1] *Trevelyan*, vol. ii. cap. xv.

in the Albany. He was buried in Poets' Corner, in Westminster Abbey, on 9th January, 1860.

In reviewing Macaulay's life and considering the application of his rare gifts, one is led to wish that fortune had either favoured him more or less. Had he been born to ancestral wealth and honours, or had he been condemned to prolonged poverty and obscurity, it is probable that he would have developed resources and powers which, as it happened, he was never called upon to display, which it is very likely he himself did not suspect. It must be regretted that he was not free to follow either politics or literature with undivided attention. Had he been a broad-acred squire with an historic name, we cannot doubt that his life would have been devoted to politics; and we can even less doubt that he would promptly have made his way into the front rank of contemporary statesmen. His unsurpassed business talent and faculty of getting through work; his oratorical gifts, which would soon, with the proper training, have developed into a complete mastery of debate; his prudence, vigour, self-command, and innate amiability; his vast knowledge and instantaneous command of it—all point to his possessing the stuff of which English Premiers are made. Who among his contemporaries can be named as more endowed with the qualities of a great parliamentary leader than he? Was Lord John Russell, or Lord Melbourne, or Lord Derby, or Sir James Graham, or Palmerston, or Cornewall Lewis his equal? If we abstract the prestige conferred by great name or great fortune in our oligarchic society, he was not the equal, but the superior, of all of them, excepting Peel and Disraeli; and he would be rash who ventured to assert that if he had been a baronet with 40,000*l.* a year, like Peel, or had been in such a position as Lord Beaconsfield was to devote

all his time, energy, and ambition to the House of Commons, he would have yielded to either. But, like Burke—though his case is certainly much less shocking—the *novus homo* of genius was not allowed to compete for the honour of serving his country in the highest office.

On the other hand, suppose that circumstances had excluded him from politics altogether, and that he had been reduced to literature alone as an avenue to fame. I have already said that I think that politics were his forte, and that, although he will live in memory chiefly as a writer, he was by nature a practical man. But it is not inconsistent with this view to hold that as a writer he would have been all the better if he had not meddled with politics at all, or only very sparingly. Politics are a good school for a student with an excessive tendency to seclusion. Gibbon was, probably, benefited by being a member of the House of Commons, because he was essentially a recluse, and a personal contact with public affairs supplied a useful corrective to his natural bent. But he never became an active politician like Macaulay, and Macaulay was in no need of the discipline which was useful to Gibbon. Macaulay's tendency was very far from being too esoteric and speculative. All the gymnastic he could have derived from a severe drilling in Hegelianism at Berlin or Tubingen would barely have sufficed to correct his practical, unspeculative tone of mind. Instead of this he had no gymnastic at all, except such as can be got from Greek and Latin grammar. Then before he was thirty he became a member of Parliament—the very last place, as he well knew, likely to foster a broad and philosophic temper. Considering what he did achieve in the whirl of business in which he lived till he was well advanced into middle age, can we doubt that a life of solitude and study would

have led him into regions of thought and inquiry to which as a matter of fact he never penetrated? It is not the number or even the quality of the books read which makes for edification, wisdom, and real knowledge, but the open eye, the recipient spirit, the patience and humility contented to grope slowly towards the light. Macaulay's mode of life was adverse to inwardness, reflection, meditation; and he had no such innate tendency in that direction that he could dispense with help from any quarter. Outward circumstances alone prevented him from taking a first rank in politics; circumstances and inward disposition combined to deprive him of the very highest rank in literature.

The attempt to classify a great writer, to fix his true place on the scroll of fame, is not blameworthy, as if it were identical with disparagement. However imperfect the attempt may be, if made with good faith it may be useful, as leading to a more accurate judgment later on. The settlement of the rank and position of eminent writers who have clearly passed into the permanent literature of a nation cannot be left to the caprice of individual readers. Literary history would become a scene of intolerable confusion, without some effort towards grouping and classifying the numerous candidates for fame. Earlier attempts in this direction, like the present, are certain to be erroneous and faulty in many respects; but if they provoke their own rectification and supersession, they will not be useless. Among English men of letters Macaulay must ever hold a place. The question is, what place? He is still generally spoken of with somewhat indiscriminating eulogy; but a serious opposition has already been made to the vulgar estimate of his merits, and it is more

likely to grow than diminish with the coming years. An equitable agreement is manifestly desirable between those who think his eloquence unsurpassed and those who think his style detestable; a middle term will have to be found.

It is an error, not always corrected by age and experience, to ask of men and writers what they cannot give. Macaulay can give us sumptuous and brilliant pictures of past times, which so far have not had their equals. His narrative power among historians is quite unapproached, and on a level with that of the greatest masters of prose fiction. Here we may pause, and doubt whether eulogy can conscientiously go further. On the other hand, he has little to say either to the mind or the heart. He has not been a pioneer into any ground untrodden by previous speculators; he is not one of those writers whom we seek "when our light is low," telling us of the things which belong unto our peace. But he has related—or may we not say sung?—many great events in English history with epic width and grandeur. He was, moreover, an honest, brave, tender-hearted man; a good citizen, a true friend, full of affection and self-sacrifice towards his kindred, virtuous and upright in every relation of life. It may be doubted whether his sweet, unselfish nature would have desired higher praise.

In the year 1875 a statue by Mr. Woolner was erected in the ante-chapel of Trinity College, for which the following inscription, at the request of the College, was written by Professor Jebb:

THOMAE BABINGTON BARONI MACAULAY
HISTORICO DOCTRINA FIDE VIVIDIS INGENII LUMINIBUS PRAECLARO
QUI PRIMUS ANNALES ITA SCRIPSIT
UT VERA FICTIS LIBENTIUS LEGERENTUR,
ORATORI REBUS COPIOSO SENTENTIIS PRESSO ANIMI MOTIBUS ELATO
QUI CUM OTII STUDIIS UNICE GAUDERET
NUNQUAM REIPUBLICAE DEFUIT,
SIVE INDIA LITTERIS ET LEGIBUS EMENDANDA
SIVE DOMI CONTRA LICENTIAM TUENDA LIBERTAS VOCARET,
POETAE NIHIL HUMILE SPIRANTI
VIRO CUI CUNCTORUM VENERATIO
MINORIS FUIT QUAM SUORUM AMOR
HUIUS COLLEGII OLIM SOCIO
QUOD SUMMA DUM VIXIT PIETATE COLUIT
AMICI MAERENTES S.S.F.C.

Of all the posthumous honors Macaulay has received this probably would have gratified him the most.

THE END.

English Men of Letters

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

FIELDING

BY

AUSTIN DOBSON

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS
FRANKLIN SQUARE

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EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

From a critical point of view, the works of Fielding have received abundant examination at the hands of a long line of distinguished writers. Of these, the latest is by no means the least; and as Mr. Leslie Stephen's brilliant studies, in the recent *édition de luxe* and the *Cornhill Magazine*, are now in every one's hands, it is perhaps no more than a wise discretion which has prompted me to confine my attention more strictly to the purely biographical side of the subject. In the present memoir, therefore, I have made it my duty, primarily, to verify such scattered anecdotes respecting Fielding as have come down to us; to correct (I hope not obtrusively) a few mis-statements which have crept into previous accounts; and to add such supplementary details as I have been able to discover for myself.

In this task I have made use of the following authorities:

I. Arthur Murphy's *Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding, Esq.* This was prefixed to the first collected edition of Fielding's works published by Andrew Millar in June, 1762; and it continued for a long time to be the recognised authority for Fielding's life. It is possible that it fairly reproduces his personality, as presented by contemporary tradition; but it is misleading in its facts, and needlessly diffuse. Under pretence of respecting "the manes of the dead," the writer seems to have found it pleasanter to fill his space with vagrant discussions on the "Middle Comedy of

the Greeks" and the machinery of the *Rape of the Lock*, than to make the requisite biographical inquiries. This is the more to be deplored, because, in 1762, Fielding's widow, brother, and sister, as well as his friend Lyttelton, were still alive, and trustworthy information should have been procurable.

II. Watson's *Life of Henry Fielding, Esq.* This is usually to be found prefixed to a selection of Fielding's works issued at Edinburgh. It also appeared as a volume in 1807, although there is no copy of it in this form at the British Museum. It carries Murphy a little farther, and corrects him in some instances. But its author had clearly never even seen the *Miscellanies* of 1743, with their valuable Preface, for he speaks of them as one volume, and in apparent ignorance of their contents.

III. Sir Walter Scott's biographical sketch for Ballantyne's *Novelist's Library.* This was published in 1821; and is now included in the writer's *Miscellaneous Prose Works.* Sir Walter made no pretence to original research, and even spoke slightingly of this particular work; but it has all the charm of his practised and genial pen.

IV. Roscoe's Memoir, compiled for the one-volume edition of Fielding, published by Washbourne and others in 1840.

V. Thackeray's well-known lecture, in the *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*, 1853.

VI. *The Life of Henry Fielding; with Notices of his Writings, his Times, and his Contemporaries.* By Frederick Lawrence. 1855. This is an exceedingly painstaking book, and constitutes the first serious attempt at a biography. Its chief defect—as pointed out at the time of its appearance—is an ill-judged emulation of Forster's *Goldsmith.* The author attempted to make Fielding a literary centre, which is impossible; and the attempt has involved him in needless digressions. He is also not always careful to give chapter and verse for his statements.

VII. Thomas Keightley's papers *On the Life and Writings of Henry Fielding*, in *Fraser's Magazine* for January and Feb-

ruary, 1858. These, prompted by Mr. Lawrence's book, are most valuable, if only for the author's frank distrust of his predecessors. They are the work of an enthusiast, and a very conscientious examiner. If, as reported, Mr. Keightley himself meditated a life of Fielding, it is much to be regretted that he never carried out his intention.

Upon the two last-mentioned works I have chiefly relied in the preparation of this study. I have freely availed myself of the material that both authors collected, verifying it always, and extending it wherever I could. Of my other sources of information — pamphlets, reviews, memoirs, and newspapers of the day—the list would be too long; and sufficient references to them are generally given in the body of the text. I will only add that I think there is scarcely a quotation in these pages, however ascertained, which has not been compared with the original; and, except where otherwise stated, all extracts from Fielding himself are taken from the first editions.

At this distance of time, new facts respecting a man of whom so little has been recorded require to be announced with considerable caution. Some definite additions to Fielding lore I have, however, been enabled to make. Thanks to the late Colonel J. L. Chester, who was engaged, only a few weeks before his death, in friendly investigations on my behalf, I am able to give, for the first time, the date and place of Fielding's second marriage, and the baptismal dates of all the children by that marriage, except the eldest. I am also able to fix approximately the true period of his love-affair with Miss Sarah Andrew. From the original assignment at South Kensington I have ascertained the exact sum paid by Millar for *Joseph Andrews;* and in Chapter V. will be found a series of extracts from a very interesting correspondence, which does not appear to have been hitherto published, between Aaron Hill, his daughters, and Richardson, respecting *Tom Jones.* Although I cannot claim credit for the discovery, I believe the present is also the first biography of Fielding which entirely discredits the unlikely story of his having

been a stroller at Bartholomew Fair; and I may also, I think, claim to have thrown some additional light on Fielding's relations with the Cibbers, seeing that the last critical essay upon the author of the *Apology*, which I have met with, contains no reference to Fielding at all. For such minor novelties as the passage from the *Universal Spectator* at p. 25, and the account of the projected translation of Lucian at p. 154, etc., the reader is referred to the book itself, where these, and other waifs and strays, are duly indicated. If, in my endeavour to secure what is freshest, I have at the same time neglected a few stereotyped quotations, which have hitherto seemed indispensable in writing of Fielding, I trust I may be forgiven.

Brief as it is, the book has not been without its obligations. To Mr. R. F. Sketchley, Keeper of the Dyce and Forster Collections at South Kensington, I am indebted for reference to the Hill correspondence, and for other kindly offices; to Mr. Frederick Locker for permission to collate Fielding's last letter with the original in his possession. My thanks are also due to Mr. R. Arthur Kinglake, J.P., of Taunton; to the Rev. Edward Hale, of Eton College; the Rev. G. C. Green, of Modbury, Devon; the Rev. W. S. Shaw, of Twerton-on-Avon; and Mr. Richard Garnett, of the British Museum. Without some expression of gratitude to the last mentioned, it would indeed be almost impossible to conclude any modern preface of this kind. If I have omitted the names of others who have been good enough to assist me, I must ask them to accept my acknowledgments, although they are not specifically expressed.

EALING, *March*, 1883.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Early Years—First Plays 1

CHAPTER II.

More Plays—Marriage—The Licensing Act . . . 27

CHAPTER III.

The "Champion"—"Joseph Andrews" 57

CHAPTER IV.

The "Miscellanies"—"Jonathan Wild" 84

CHAPTER V.

"Tom Jones" 111

CHAPTER VI.

Justice Life—"Amelia" 137

CHAPTER VII.

"Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon" 158

POSTSCRIPT 180

FIELDING.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS—FIRST PLAYS.

LIKE his contemporary Smollett, Henry Fielding came of an ancient family, and might, in his Horatian moods, have traced his origin to Inachus. The lineage of the house of Denbigh, as given in Burke, fully justifies the splendid but sufficiently quoted eulogy of Gibbon. From that first Jeffrey of Hapsburgh, who came to England, *temp.* Henry III., and assumed the name of Fieldeng, or Filding, "from his father's pretensions to the dominions of Lauffenbourg and Rinfilding," the future novelist could boast a long line of illustrious ancestors. There was a Sir William Feilding killed at Tewkesbury, and a Sir Everard who commanded at Stoke. Another Sir William, a staunch Royalist, was created Earl of Denbigh, and died in fighting King Charles's battles. Of his two sons, the elder, Basil, who succeeded to the title, was a Parliamentarian, and served at Edgehill under Essex. George, his second son, was raised to the peerage of Ireland as Viscount Callan, with succession to the earldom of Desmond; and from this, the younger branch of the Denbigh family, Henry Fielding directly descended. The Earl of Des-

mond's fifth son, John, entered the Church, becoming Canon of Salisbury and Chaplain to William III. By his wife Bridget, daughter of Scipio Cockain, Esq., of Somerset, he had three sons and three daughters. Edmund, the third son, was a soldier, who fought with distinction under Marlborough. When about the age of thirty, he married Sarah, daughter of Sir Henry Gould, Knt., of Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury, in Somerset, and one of the Judges of the King's Bench. These last were the parents of the novelist, who was born at Sharpham Park on the 22d of April, 1707. One of Dr. John Fielding's nieces, it may here be added, married the first Duke of Kingston, becoming the mother of Lady Mary Pierrepont, afterwards Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was thus Henry Fielding's second cousin. She had, however, been born in 1689, and was consequently some years his senior.

According to a pedigree given in Nichols (*History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*), Edmund Fielding was only a lieutenant when he married; and it is even not improbable (as Mr. Keightley conjectures from the nearly secret union of *Lieutenant* Booth and Amelia in the later novel) that the match may have been a stolen one. At all events, the bride continued to reside at her father's house; and the fact that Sir Henry Gould, by his will made in March, 1706, left his daughter £3000, which was to be invested "in the purchase either of a Church or Colledge lease, or of lands of Inheritance," for her sole use, her husband "having nothing to doe with it," would seem (as Mr. Keightley suggests) to indicate a distrust of his military, and possibly impecunious, son-in-law. This money, it is also important to remember, was to come to her children at her death. Sir Henry Gould did not long survive the making of his will,

and died in March, 1710.[1] The Fieldings must then have removed to a small house at East Stour (now Stower), in Dorsetshire, where Sarah Fielding was born in the following November. It may be that this property was purchased with Mrs. Fielding's money; but information is wanting upon the subject. At East Stour, according to the extracts from the parish register given in Hutchins's *History of Dorset*, four children were born—namely, Sarah, above mentioned, afterwards the authoress of *David Simple*, Anne, Beatrice, and another son, Edmund. Edmund, says Arthur Murphy, "was an officer in the marine service," and (adds Mr. Lawrence) "died young." Anne died at East Stour in August, 1716. Of Beatrice nothing further is known. These would appear to have been all the children of Edmund Fielding by his first wife, although, as Sarah Fielding is styled on her monument at Bath the *second* daughter of General Fielding, it is not impossible that another daughter may have been born at Sharpham Park.

At East Stour the Fieldings certainly resided until April, 1718, when Mrs. Fielding died, leaving her elder son a boy of not quite eleven years of age. How much longer the family remained there is unrecorded; but it is clear that a great part of Henry Fielding's childhood must have been spent by the "pleasant Banks of sweetly-winding Stour" which passes through it, and to which he subsequently refers in *Tom Jones*. His education during this time was confided to a certain Mr. Oliver, whom

[1] Mr. Keightley, who seems to have seen the will, dates it—doubtless by a slip of the pen—May, 1708. Reference to the original, however, now at Somerset House, shows the correct date to be March 8, 1706, before which time the marriage of Fielding's parents must therefore be placed.

Lawrence designates the "family chaplain." Keightley supposes that he was the curate of East Stour; but Hutchins, a better authority than either, says that he was the clergyman of Motcombe, a neighbouring village. Of this gentleman, according to Murphy, Parson Trulliber in *Joseph Andrews* is a "very humorous and striking portrait." It is certainly more humorous than complimentary.

From Mr. Oliver's fostering care—and the result shows that, whatever may have been the pig-dealing propensities of Parson Trulliber, it was not entirely profitless—Fielding was transferred to Eton. When this took place is not known; but at that time boys entered the school much earlier than they do now, and it was probably not long after his mother's death. The Eton boys were then, as at present, divided into collegers and oppidans. There are no registers of oppidans before the end of the last century; but the Provost of Eton has been good enough to search the college lists from 1715 to 1735, and there is no record of any Henry Fielding, nor indeed of any Fielding at all. It may, therefore, be concluded that he was an oppidan. No particulars of his stay at Eton have come down to us; but it is to be presumed Murphy's statement that, "when he left the place, he was said to be uncommonly versed in the Greek authors, and an early master of the Latin classics," is not made without foundation.[1] We have also his own authority (in *Tom Jones*) for supposing that he occasionally, if not frequently, sacrificed "with true *Spartan* devotion" at the "birchen Altar," of which a representation is to be found in Mr.

[1] Fielding's own words in the verses to Walpole some years later scarcely go so far:

> "*Tuscan* and *French* are in my Head;
> *Latin* I write, and *Greek* I—read."

Maxwell Lyte's history of the College. And it may fairly be inferred that he took part in the different sports and pastimes of the day, such as Conquering Lobs, Steal baggage, Chuck, Starecaps, and so forth. Nor does it need any strong effort of imagination to conclude that he bathed in "Sandy-hole" or "Cuckow ware," attended the cock-fights in Bedford's Yard and the bull-baiting in Bachelor's Acre, drank mild punch at the "Christopher," and, no doubt, was occasionally brought back by Jack Cutler, "Pursuivant of Runaways," to make his explanations to Dr. Bland the Head-Master, or Francis Goode the Usher. Amongst his school-fellows were some who subsequently attained to high dignities in the State, and still remained his friends. Foremost of these was George Lyttelton, later the statesman and orator, who had already commenced poet as an Eton boy with his "Soliloquy of a Beauty in the Country." Another was the future Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, the wit and squib-writer, then known as Charles Hanbury only. A third was Thomas Winnington, for whom, in after years, Fielding fought hard with brain and pen when Tory scribblers assailed his memory. Of those who must be regarded as contemporaries merely, were William Pitt, the "Great Commoner," and yet greater Earl of Chatham; Henry Fox, Lord Holland; and Charles Pratt, Earl Camden. Gilbert West, the translator of Pindar, may also have been at Eton in Fielding's time, as he was only a year older, and was intimate with Lyttelton. Thomas Augustine Arne, again, famous in days to come as Dr. Arne, was doubtless also at this date practising sedulously upon that "miserable cracked common flute," with which tradition avers he was wont to torment his school-fellows. Gray and Horace Walpole belong to a later period.

During his stay at Eton, Fielding had been rapidly developing from a boy into a young man. When he left school it is impossible to say; but he was probably seventeen or eighteen years of age, and it is at this stage of his career that must be fixed an occurrence which some of his biographers place much farther on. This is his earliest recorded love-affair. At Lyme Regis there resided a young lady, who, in addition to great personal charms, had the advantage of being the only daughter and heiress of one Solomon Andrew, deceased, a merchant of considerable local reputation. Lawrence says that she was Fielding's cousin. This may be so; but the statement is unsupported by any authority. It is certain, however, that her father was dead, and that she was living "in maiden meditation" at Lyme with one of her guardians, Mr. Andrew Tucker. In his chance visits to that place, young Fielding appears to have become desperately enamoured of her, and to have sadly fluttered the Dorset dovecotes by his pertinacious and undesirable attentions. At one time he seems to have actually meditated the abduction of his "flame," for an entry in the town archives, discovered by Mr. George Roberts, sometime Mayor of Lyme, who tells the story, declares that Andrew Tucker, Esq., went in fear of his life "owing to the behaviour of Henry Fielding and his attendant, or man." Such a state of things (especially when guardians have sons of their own) is clearly not to be endured; and Miss Andrew was prudently transferred to the care of another guardian, Mr. Rhodes of Modbury, in South Devon, to whose son, a young gentleman of Oxford, she was promptly married. Burke (*Landed Gentry*, 1858) dates the marriage in 1726, a date which is practically confirmed by the baptism of a child at Modbury in

April of the following year.[1] Burke further describes the husband as Mr. Ambrose Rhodes of Buckland House, Buckland-Tout-Saints. His son, Mr. Rhodes of Bellair, near Exeter, was gentleman of the Privy Chamber to George III.; and one of his descendants possessed a picture which passed for the portrait of Sophia Western. The tradition of the Tucker family pointed to Miss Andrew as the original of Fielding's heroine; but though such a supposition is intelligible, it is untenable, since he says distinctly (Book XIII. chap. i. of *Tom Jones*) that his model was his first wife, whose likeness he moreover draws very specifically in another place, by declaring that she resembled Margaret Cecil, Lady Ranelagh, and, more nearly, "the famous Dutchess of *Mazarine*."

With this early escapade is perhaps to be connected what seems to have been one of Fielding's earliest literary efforts. This is a modernisation in burlesque octosyllabic verse of part of Juvenal's sixth satire. In the "Preface" to the later published *Miscellanies*, it is said to have been "originally sketched out before he was Twenty," and to have constituted "all the Revenge taken by an injured Lover." But it must have been largely revised subsequent to that date, for it contains references to Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Woffington, Cibber the younger, and even to Richardson's *Pamela*. It has no special merit, although some of the couplets have the true Swiftian turn. If Murphy's statement be correct, that the author "went from Eton to Leyden," it must have been planned at the latter place, where, he tells us in the preface to *Don Quixote in England*, he also began that comedy. Notwithstanding these literary distractions, he is nevertheless reported to have

[1] This has been ascertained from the Modbury parish registers.

studied the civilians "with a remarkable application for about two years." At the expiration of this time, remittances from home failing, he was obliged to forego the lectures of the "learned Vitriarius" (then Professor of Civil Law at Leyden University), and return to London, which he did at the beginning of 1728 or the end of 1727.

The fact was that his father, never a rich man, had married again. His second wife was a widow named Eleanor Rasa; and by this time he was fast acquiring a second family. Under the pressure of his growing cares, he found himself, however willing, as unable to maintain his eldest son in London as he had previously been to discharge his expenses at Leyden. Nominally, he made him an allowance of two hundred a year; but this, as Fielding himself explained, "any body might pay that would." The consequence was, that not long after the arrival of the latter in the Metropolis he had given up all idea of pursuing the law, to which his mother's legal connections had perhaps first attracted him, and had determined to adopt the more seductive occupation of living by his wits. At this date he was in the prime of youth. From the portrait by Hogarth representing him at a time when he was broken in health and had lost his teeth, it is difficult to reconstruct his likeness at twenty. But we may fairly assume the "high-arched Roman nose" with which his enemies reproached him, the dark eyes, the prominent chin, and the humorous expression; and it is clear that he must have been tall and vigorous, for he was over six feet when he died, and had been remarkably strong and active. Add to this that he inherited a splendid constitution, with an unlimited capacity for enjoyment, and we have a fair idea of Henry Fielding at that moment of his career, when

with passions "tremblingly alive all o'er"—as Murphy says—he stood,

"This way and that dividing the swift mind,"

between the professions of hackney-writer and hackney-coachman. His natural bias was towards literature, and his opportunities, if not his inclinations, directed him to dramatic writing.

It is not necessary to attempt any detailed account of the state of the stage at this epoch. Nevertheless, if only to avoid confusion in the future, it will be well to enumerate the several London theatres in 1728, the more especially as the list is by no means lengthy. First and foremost there was the old Opera House in the Haymarket, built by Vanbrugh, as far back as 1705, upon the site now occupied by Her Majesty's Theatre. This was the home of that popular Italian song which so excited the anger of thorough-going Britons; and here, at the beginning of 1728, they were performing Handel's opera of *Siroe*, and delighting the *cognoscenti* by *Dite che fà*, the echo-air in the same composer's *Tolomeo*. Opposite the Opera House, and, in position, only "a few feet distant" from the existing Haymarket Theatre, was the New, or Little Theatre in the Haymarket, which, from the fact that it had been opened eight years before by "the French Comedians," was also sometimes styled the French House. Next comes the no-longer-existent theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which Christopher Rich had rebuilt in 1714, and which his son John had made notorious for pantomimes. Here the *Beggar's Opera*, precursor of a long line of similar productions, had just been successfully produced. Finally, most ancient of them all, there was the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane, otherwise the King's Play House, or Old

House. The virtual patentees at this time were the actors Colley Cibber, Robert Wilks, and Barton Booth. The two former were just playing the *Provok'd Husband*, in which the famous Mrs. Oldfield (Pope's "Narcissa") had created a *furore* by her assumption of Lady Townley. These, in February, 1728, were the four principal London theatres. Goodman's Fields, where Garrick made his *début*, was not opened until the following year, and Covent Garden belongs to a still later date.

Fielding's first dramatic essay—or, to speak more precisely, the first of his dramatic essays that was produced upon the stage—was a five-act comedy entitled *Love in Several Masques.* It was played at Drury Lane in February, 1728, succeeding the *Provok'd Husband.* In his "Preface" the young author refers to the disadvantage under which he laboured in following close upon that comedy, and also in being "cotemporary with an Entertainment which engrosses the whole Talk and Admiration of the Town,"—*i. e.* the *Beggar's Opera.* He also acknowledges the kindness of Wilks and Cibber "previous to its Representation," and the fact that he had thus acquired their suffrages makes it doubtful whether his stay at Leyden was not really briefer than is generally supposed, or that he left Eton much earlier. In either case he must have been in London some months before *Love in Several Masques* appeared, for a first play by an untried youth of twenty, however promising, is not easily brought upon the boards in any era; and from his own utterances in *Pasquin*, ten years later, it is clear that it was no easier then than now. The sentiments of the Fustian of that piece in the following protest probably give an accurate picture of the average dramatic experiences of Henry Fielding:

"These little things, Mr. *Sneerwell*, will sometimes happen. Indeed a Poet undergoes a great deal before he comes to his Third Night; first with the Muses, who are humorous Ladies, and must be attended; for if they take it into their Head at any time to go abroad and leave you, you will pump your Brain in vain: Then, Sir, with the Master of a *Playhouse* to get it acted, *whom you generally follow a quarter of a Year before you know whether he will receive it or no;* and then perhaps he tells you it won't do, and returns it you again, reserving the Subject, and perhaps the Name, which he brings out in his next *Pantomime;* but if he should receive the Play, then you must attend again to get it writ out into Parts, and Rehears'd. Well, Sir, at last the Rehearsals begin; then, Sir, begins another Scene of Trouble with the Actors, some of whom dont like their Parts, and all are continually plaguing you with Alterations: At length, after having waded thro' all these Difficulties, his [the?] Play appears on the Stage, where one Man Hisses out of Resentment to the Author; a Second out of Dislike to the House; a Third out of Dislike to the Actor; a Fourth out of Dislike to the Play; a Fifth for the Joke sake; a Sixth to keep all the rest in Company. Enemies abuse him, Friends give him up, the Play is damn'd, and the Author goes to the Devil, so ends the Farce."

To which Sneerwell replies, with much promptitude: "The Tragedy rather, I think, Mr. *Fustian*." But whatever may have been its preliminary difficulties, Fielding's first play was not exposed to so untoward a fate. It was well received. As might be expected in a beginner, and as indeed the references in the Preface to Wycherley and Congreve would lead us to expect, it was an obvious attempt in the manner of those then all-popular writers. The dialogue is ready and witty. But the characters have that obvious defect which Lord Beaconsfield recognised when he spoke in later life of his own earliest efforts. "Books written by boys," he says, "which pretend to give a picture of manners and to deal in knowledge of human nature must necessarily be founded on affectation."

To this rule the personages of *Love in Several Masques* are no exception. They are drawn rather from the stage than from life, and there is little constructive skill in the plot. A certain booby squire, Sir Positive Trap, seems like a first indication of some of the later successes in the novels; but the rest of the *dramatis personæ* are puppets. The success of the piece was probably owing to the acting of Mrs. Oldfield, who took the part of Lady Matchless, a character closely related to the Lady Townleys and Lady Betty Modishes, in which she won her triumphs. She seems, indeed, to have been unusually interested in this comedy, for she consented to play in it notwithstanding a "slight Indisposition" contracted "by her violent Fatigue in the Part of Lady Townly," and she assisted the author with her corrections and advice—perhaps with her influence as an actress. Fielding's distinguished kinswoman Lady Mary Wortley Montagu also read the MS. Looking to certain scenes in it, the protestation in the Prologue—

> "*Nought shall offend the Fair Ones Ears to-day,*
> *Which they might blush to hear, or blush to say*"—

has an air of insincerity, although, contrasted with some of the writer's later productions, *Love in Several Masques* is comparatively pure. But he might honestly think that the work which had received the *imprimatur* of a stage-queen and a lady of quality should fairly be regarded as morally blameless, and it is not necessary to bring any bulk of evidence to prove that the morality of 1728 differed from the morality of to-day.

To the last-mentioned year is ascribed a poem entitled the "*Masquerade.* Inscribed to C—t H—d—g—r. By Lemuel Gulliver, Poet Laureate to the King of Lilliput." In this Fielding made his satirical contribution to the at-

tacks on those impure gatherings organised by the notorious Heidegger, which Hogarth had not long before stigmatised pictorially in the plate known to collectors as the "large Masquerade Ticket." As verse this performance is worthless, and it is not very forcibly on the side of good manners; but the ironic dedication has a certain touch of Fielding's later fashion. Two other poetical pieces, afterwards included in the *Miscellanies* of 1743, also bear the date of 1728. One is *A Description of U—n G—* (alias *New Hog's Norton*) *in Com. Hants*, which Mr. Keightley has identified with Upton Grey, near Odiham, in Hampshire. It is a burlesque description of a tumble-down country-house in which the writer was staying, and is addressed to Rosalinda. The other is entitled *To Euthalia*, from which it must be concluded that, in 1728, Sarah Andrew had found more than one successor. But in spite of some biographers, and of the apparent encouragement given to his first comedy, Fielding does not seem to have followed up dramatic authorship with equal vigour, or at all events with equal success. His real connection with the stage does not begin until January, 1730, when the *Temple Beau* was produced by Giffard the actor at the theatre in Goodman's Fields, which had then just been opened by Thomas Odell; and it may be presumed that his incentive was rather want of funds than desire of fame. *The Temple Beau* certainly shows an advance upon its predecessor; but it is an advance in the same direction, imitation of Congreve; and although Geneste ranks it among the best of Fielding's plays, it is doubtful whether modern criticism would sustain his verdict. It ran for a short time, and was then withdrawn. The Prologue was the work of James Ralph, afterwards Fielding's colleague in the *Champion*, and it thus refers to the prevailing taste.

The *Beggar's Opera* had killed Italian song, but now a new danger had arisen—

> "*Humour and Wit, in each politer Age,*
> *Triumphant, rear'd the Trophies of the Stage:*
> *But only Farce, and Shew, will now go down,*
> *And* Harlequin's *the Darling of the Town.*"

As if to confirm his friend's opinion, Fielding's next piece combined the popular ingredients above referred to. In March following he produced at the Haymarket, under the pseudonym of Scriblerus Secundus, *The Author's Farce*, with a "Puppet Show" called *The Pleasures of the Town.* In the Puppet Show, Henley, the Clare-Market Orator, and Samuel Johnson, the quack author of the popular *Hurlothrumbo*, were smartly satirised, as also was the fashionable craze for Opera and Pantomime. But the most enduring part of this odd medley is the farce which occupies the two first acts, and under thin disguises no doubt depicts much which was within the writer's experience. At all events, Luckless, the author in the play, has more than one of the characteristics which distinguish the traditional portrait of Fielding himself in his early years. He wears a laced coat, is in love, writes plays, and cannot pay his landlady, who declares, with some show of justice, that she "would no more depend on a Benefit-Night of an unacted Play, than she wou'd on a Benefit-Ticket in an undrawn Lottery." "Her Floor (she laments) is all spoil'd with Ink—her Windows with Verses, and her Door has been almost beat down with Duns." But the most humorous scenes in the play—scenes really admirable in their ironic delineation of the seamy side of authorship in 1730—are those in which Mr. Bookweight, the publisher—the Curll or Osborne of the period—is shown surrounded by

the obedient hacks, who feed at his table on "good Milk-porridge, very often twice a Day," and manufacture the murders, ghost-stories, political pamphlets, and translations from Virgil (out of Dryden) with which he supplies his customers. Here is one of them as good as any:

"*Bookweight.* So, Mr. *Index*, what News with you?

"*Index.* I have brought my Bill, Sir.

"*Book.* What's here?—for fitting the Motto of *Risum teneatis Amici* to a dozen Pamphlets at Sixpence per each, Six Shillings—For *Omnia vincit Amor, & nos cedamus Amori*, Sixpence—For *Difficile est Satyram non scribere*, Sixpence—Hum! hum! hum! Sum total, for Thirty-six *Latin* Motto's, Eighteen Shillings; ditto *English*, One Shilling and Ninepence; ditto *Greek*, Four, Four Shillings. These *Greek* Motto's are excessively dear.

"*Ind.* If you have them cheaper at either of the Universities, I will give you mine for nothing.

"*Book.* You shall have your Money immediately, and pray remember that I must have two *Latin* Seditious Motto's and one *Greek* Moral Motto for Pamphlets by to-morrow Morning. . . .

"*Ind.* Sir, I shall provide them. Be pleas'd to look on that, Sir, and print me Five hundred Proposals, and as many Receipts.

"*Book.* Proposals for printing by Subscription a new Translation of Cicero, *Of the Nature of the Gods and his Tusculan Questions*, by *Jeremy Index*, Esq.; I am sorry you have undertaken this, for it prevents a Design of mine.

"*Ind.* Indeed, Sir, it does not, for you see all of the Book that I ever intend to publish. It is only a handsome Way of asking one's Friends for a Guinea.

"*Book.* Then you have not translated a Word of it, perhaps.

"*Ind.* Not a single Syllable.

"*Book.* Well, you shall have your Proposals forthwith; but I desire you wou'd be a little more reasonable in your Bills for the future, or I shall deal with you no longer; for I have a certain Fellow of a College, who offers to furnish me with Second-hand Motto's out of the *Spectator* for Two-pence each.

"*Ind.* Sir, I only desire to live by my Goods, and I hope you will be pleas'd to allow some difference between a neat fresh Piece,

piping hot out of the Classicks, and old thread-bare worn-out Stuff that has past thro' ev'ry Pedant's Mouth. . . ."

The latter part of this amusing dialogue, referring to Mr. Index's translation from Cicero, was added in an amended version of the *Author's Farce*, which appeared some years later, and in which Fielding depicts the portrait of another all-powerful personage in the literary life—the actor-manager. This, however, will be more conveniently treated under its proper date, and it is only necessary to say here that the slight sketches of Marplay and Sparkish given in the first edition, were presumably intended for Cibber and Wilks, with whom, notwithstanding the "civil and kind Behaviour" for which he had thanked them in the "Preface" to *Love in Several Masques*, the young dramatist was now, it seems, at war. In the introduction to the *Miscellanies*, he refers to "a slight Pique" with Wilks; and it is not impossible that the key to the difference may be found in the following passage:

"*Sparkish.* What dost think of the Play?

"*Marplay.* It may be a very good one, for ought I know; *but I know the Author has no Interest.*

"*Spark.* Give me Interest, and rat the Play.

"*Mar.* Rather rat the Play which has no Interest. Interest sways as much in the Theatre as at Court.—And you know it is not always the Companion of Merit in either."

The handsome student from Leyden—the potential Congreve who wrote *Love in Several Masques*, and had Lady Mary Wortley Montagu for patroness, might fairly be supposed to have expectations which warranted the civilities of Messrs. Wilks and Cibber; but the "Luckless" of two years later had probably convinced them that his dramatic performances did not involve their *sine qua non* of success. Under these circumstances nothing perhaps could

be more natural than that they should play their parts in his little satire.

We have dwelt at some length upon the *Author's Farce*, because it is the first of Fielding's plays in which, leaving the "wit-traps" of Wycherley and Congreve, he deals with the direct censure of contemporary folly, and because, apart from translation and adaptation, it is in this field that his most brilliant theatrical successes were won. For the next few years he continued to produce comedies and farces with great rapidity, both under his own name, and under the pseudonym of Scriblerus Secundus. Most of these show manifest signs of haste, and some are recklessly immodest. We shall confine ourselves to one or two of the best, and do little more than enumerate the others. Of these latter, the *Coffee-House Politician; or, The Justice caught in his own Trap*, 1730, succeeded the *Author's Farce*. The leading idea, that of a tradesman who neglects his shop for "foreign affairs," appears to be derived from Addison's excellent character-sketch in the *Tatler* of the "Political Upholsterer." This is the more likely, in that Arne the musician, whose father is generally supposed to have been Addison's original, was Fielding's contemporary at Eton. Justice Squeezum, another character contained in this play, is a kind of first draft of the later Justice Thrasher in *Amelia*. The representation of the trading justice on the stage, however, was by no means new, since Justice Quorum in Coffey's *Beggar's Wedding* (with whom, as will appear presently, Fielding's name has been erroneously associated) exhibits similar characteristics. Omitting for the moment the burlesque of *Tom Thumb*, the *Coffee-House Politician* was followed by the *Letter Writers; or, A new Way to Keep a Wife at Home*, 1731, a brisk little farce, with one vigorously drawn char-

acter, that of Jack Commons, a young university rake; the *Grub-Street Opera*, 1731; the farce of the *Lottery*, 1731, in which the famous Mrs. Clive, then Miss Raftor, appeared; the *Modern Husband*, 1732; the *Covent Garden Tragedy*, 1732, a broad and rather riotous burlesque of Ambrose Philips' *Distrest Mother;* and the *Debauchees; or, The Jesuit Caught*, 1732—which was based upon the then debated story of Father Girard and Catherine Cadière.

Neither of the two last-named pieces is worthy of the author, and their strongest condemnation in our day is that they were condemned in their own for their unbridled license, the *Grub Street Journal* going so far as to say that they had "met with the universal detestation of the Town." The *Modern Husband*, which turns on that most loathsome of all commercial pursuits, the traffic of a husband in his wife's dishonour, appears, oddly enough, to have been regarded by its author with especial complacency. Its prologue lays stress upon the moral purpose; it was dedicated to Sir Robert Walpole; and from a couple of letters printed in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Correspondence*, it is clear that it had been submitted to her perusal. It had, however, no great success upon the stage and the chief thing worth remembering about it is that it afforded his last character to Wilks, who played the part of Bellamant. That "slight Pique," of which mention has been made, was no doubt by this time a thing of the past.

But if most of the works in the foregoing list can hardly be regarded as creditable to Fielding's artistic or moral sense, one of them at least deserves to be excepted, and that is the burlesque of *Tom Thumb*. This was first brought out in 1730 at the little theatre in the Haymarket, where it met with a favourable reception. In the follow-

ing year it was enlarged to three acts (in the first version there had been but two), and reproduced at the same theatre as the *Tragedy of Tragedies; or, The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, "with the Annotations of H. Scriblerus Secundus." It is certainly one of the best burlesques ever written. As Baker observes in his *Biographia Dramatica*, it may fairly be ranked as a sequel to Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, since it includes the absurdities of nearly all the writers of tragedies from the period when that piece stops to 1730. Among the authors satirised are Nat. Lee, Thomson (whose famous

"O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!"

is parodied by

"O Huncamunca, Huncamunca, O!"),

Banks's *Earl of Essex*, a favourite play at Bartholomew Fair, the *Busiris* of Young, and the *Aurengzebe* of Dryden, etc. The annotations, which abound in transparent references to Dr. B[*entle*]y, Mr. T[*heobal*]d, Mr. D[*enni*]s, are excellent imitations of contemporary pedantry. One example, elicited in Act 1 by a reference to "giants," must stand for many:

"That learned Historian Mr. S——n in the third Number of his Criticism on our Author, takes great Pains to explode this Passage. It is, says he, difficult to guess what Giants are here meant, unless the Giant *Despair* in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, or the giant *Greatness* in the *Royal Villain;* for I have heard of no other sort of Giants in the Reign of King *Arthur*. *Petrus Burmanus* makes three *Tom Thumbs*, one whereof he supposes to have been the same Person whom the *Greeks* called *Hercules*, and that by these Giants are to be understood the *Centaurs* slain by that Heroe. Another *Tom Thumb* he contends to have been no other than the *Hermes Trismegistus* of the Antients. The third *Tom Thumb* he places under the Reign of King *Arthur;* to which third *Tom Thumb*, says he, the Actions of

the other two were attributed. Now, tho' I know that this Opinion is supported by an Assertion of *Justus Lipsius*, *Thomam illum Thumbum non alium quam Herculem fuisse satis constat;* yet shall I venture to oppose one Line of Mr. *Midwinter*, against them all,

'*In* Arthurs' *Court* Tom Thumb *did live.*'

"But then, says Dr. *B——y*, if we place *Tom Thumb* in the Court of King *Arthur*, it will be proper to place that Court out of *Britain*, where no Giants were ever heard of. *Spencer*, in his *Fairy Queen*, is of another Opinion, where describing *Albion*, he says,

'Far within, a salvage Nation dwelt
Of hideous Giants.'"

And in the same canto:

"'*Then* Elfar, *with two Brethren Giants had*
The one of which had two Heads,—
The other three.'

Risum teneatis, Amici."

Of the play itself it is difficult to give an idea by extract, as nearly every line travesties some tragic passage once familiar to play-goers, and now utterly forgotten. But the following lines from one of the speeches of Lord Grizzle—a part admirably acted by Liston in later years[1]—are a fair specimen of its ludicrous use (or rather abuse) of simile:

"Yet think not long, I will my Rival bear,
Or unreveng'd the slighted Willow wear;
The gloomy, brooding Tempest now confin'd,
Within the hollow Caverns of my Mind,
In dreadful Whirl, shall rowl along the Coasts,
Shall thin the Land of all the Men it boasts,
And cram up ev'ry Chink of Hell with Ghosts.
So have I seen, in some dark Winter's Day,
A sudden Storm rush down the Sky's High-Way,

[1] Compare Hazlitt *On the Comic Writers of the Last Century.*

Sweep thro' the Streets with terrible ding-dong,
Gush thro' the Spouts, and wash whole Crowds along.
The crowded Shops, the thronging Vermin skreen,
Together cram the Dirty and the Clean,
And not one Shoe-Boy in the Street is seen."

In the modern version of Kane O'Hara, to which songs were added, the *Tragedy of Tragedies* still keeps, or kept the stage. But its crowning glory is its traditional connection with Swift, who told Mrs. Pilkington that he "had not laugh'd above twice" in his life, once at the tricks of a merry-andrew, and again when (in Fielding's burlesque) Tom Thumb killed the ghost. This is an incident of the earlier versions, omitted in deference to the critics, for which the reader will seek vainly in the play as now printed; and even then he will discover that Mrs. Pilkington's memory served her imperfectly, since it is not Tom Thumb who kills the ghost, but the ghost of Tom Thumb which is killed by his jealous rival, Lord Grizzle. A trifling inaccuracy of this sort, however, is rather in favor of the truth of the story than against it, for a pure fiction would in all probability have been more precise. Another point of interest in connection with this burlesque is the frontispiece which Hogarth supplied to the edition in 1731. It has no special value as a design, but it constitutes the earliest reference to that friendship with the painter, of which so many traces are to be found in Fielding's works.

Hitherto, Fielding had succeeded best in burlesque. But, in 1732, the same year in which he produced the *Modern Husband*, the *Debauchees*, and the *Covent Garden Tragedy*, he made an adaptation of Molière's *Médecin malgré lui*, which had already been imitated in English by Mrs. Centlivre and others. This little piece, to which he gave the title of the *Mock-Doctor; or, The Dumb Lady*

cur'd, was well received. The French original was rendered with tolerable closeness; but here and there Fielding has introduced little touches of his own, as, for instance, where Gregory (Sganarelle) tells his wife Dorcas (Martine), whom he has just been beating, that as they are but one, whenever he beats her he beats half of himself. To this she replies by requesting that for the future he will beat the other half. An entire scene (the thirteenth) was also added at the desire of Miss Raftor, who played Dorcas, and thought her part too short. This is apparently intended as a burlesque of the notorious quack Misaubin, to whom the *Mock-Doctor* was ironically dedicated. He was the proprietor of a famous pill, and was introduced by Hogarth into the *Harlot's Progress*. Gregory was played by Theophilus Cibber, and the preface contains a complimentary reference to his acting, and the expected retirement of his father from the stage. Neither Geneste nor Lawrence gives the date when the piece was first produced, but if the "April" on the dubious author's benefit ticket attributed to Hogarth be correct, it must have been in the first months of 1732.

The cordial reception of the *Mock-Doctor* seems to have encouraged Fielding to make further levies upon Molière, and he speaks of his hope to do so in the "Preface." As a matter of fact, he produced a version of *L'Avare* at Drury Lane in the following year, which entirely outshone the older versions of Shadwell and Ozell, and gained from Voltaire the praise of having added to the original "*quelques beautés de dialogue particulières à sâ* (Fielding's) *nation.*" Lovegold, its leading *rôle*, became a stock part. It was well played by its first actor Griffin, and was a favorite exercise with Macklin, Shuter, and (in our own days) Phelps.

In February, 1733, when the *Miser* was first acted, Fielding was five and twenty. His means at this time were, in all probability, exceedingly uncertain. The small proportion of money due to him at his mother's death had doubtless been long since exhausted, and he must have been almost wholly dependent upon the precarious profits of his pen. That he was assisted by rich and noble friends to any material extent appears, in spite of Murphy, to be unlikely. At all events, an occasional dedication to the Duke of Richmond or the Earl of Chesterfield cannot be regarded as proof positive. Lyttelton, who certainly befriended him in later life, was for a great part of this period absent on the Grand Tour, and Ralph Allen had not yet come forward. In default of the always deferred allowance, his father's house at Salisbury (?) was no doubt open to him; and it is plain, from indications in his minor poems, that he occasionally escaped into the country. But in London he lived for the most part, and probably not very worshipfully. What, even now, would be the life of a young man of Fielding's age, fond of pleasure, careless of the future, very liberally equipped with high spirits, and straightway exposed to the perilous seductions of the stage? Fielding had the defects of his qualities, and was no better than the rest of those about him. He was manly, and frank, and generous; but these characteristics could scarcely protect him from the terrors of the tip-staff, and the sequels of "t'other bottle." Indeed, he very honestly and unfeignedly confesses to the lapses of his youth in the *Journey from this World to the Next*, adding that he pretended "to very little Virtue more than general Philanthropy and private Friendship." It is therefore but reasonable to infer that his daily life must have been more than usually characterised by the vi-

cissitudes of the eighteenth-century prodigal,—alternations from the "Rose" to a Clare-Market ordinary, from gold-lace to fustian, from champagne to "British Burgundy." In a rhymed petition to Walpole, dated 1730, he makes pleasant mirth of what no doubt was sometimes sober truth—his debts, his duns, and his dinnerless condition. He (the verses tells us)

> "—— from his Garret can look down
> On the whole Street of *Arlington*."[1]

Again—

> "The Family that dines the latest
> Is in our Street esteem'd the greatest;
> But latest Hours must surely fall
> Before him who ne'er dines at all;"

and

> "This too doth in my Favour speak,
> Your Levée is but twice a Week;
> From mine I can exclude but one Day,
> My Door is quiet on a *Sunday*."

When he can admit so much even jestingly of himself, it is but legitimate to presume that there is no great exaggeration in the portrait of him in 1735, by the anonymous satirist of *Seasonable Reproof:*

> "*F*——*g*, who *yesterday* appear'd so rough,
> Clad in *coarse Frize*, and plaister'd down with *Snuff*,
> See how his *Instant* gaudy Trappings shine;
> What *Play-house* Bard was ever seen so fine!
> But this, not from his *Humour* flows, you'll say,
> But mere *Necessity;*—for last Night lay
> In *Pawn*, the *Velvet* which he wears to-Day."

His work bears traces of the inequalities and irregu-

[1] Where Sir Robert lived.

larities of his mode of living. Although in certain cases (*e. g.* the revised edition of *Tom Thumb*) the artist and scholar seems to have spasmodically asserted himself, the majority of his plays were hasty and ill-considered performances, most of which (as Lady Mary said) he would have thrown into the fire "if meat could have been got without money, and money without scribbling." "When he had contracted to bring on a play, or a farce," says Murphy, "it is well known, by many of his friends now living, that he would go home rather late from a tavern, and would, the next morning, deliver a scene to the players, written upon the papers which had wrapped the tobacco, in which he so much delighted." It is not easy to conceive, unless Fielding's capacities as a smoker were phenomenal, that any large contribution to dramatic literature could have been made upon the wrappings of Virginia or Freeman's Best; but that his reputation for careless production was established amongst his contemporaries is manifest from the following passage in a burlesque *Author's Will*, published in the *Universal Spectator* of Oldys:

"*Item*, I give and bequeath to my very *negligent* Friend *Henry Drama*, Esq., all my INDUSTRY. And whereas the World may think this an unnecessary Legacy, forasmuch as the said *Henry Drama*, Esq., brings on the Stage *four Pieces* every Season; yet as such Pieces are always wrote with uncommon *Rapidity*, and during such fatal Intervals only as the *Stocks* have been on the *Fall*, this Legacy will be of use to him to revise and correct his Works. Furthermore, for fear the said *Henry Drama* should make an ill Use of the said *Industry*, and expend it all on a *Ballad Farce*, it's my Will the said Legacy should be paid him by equal Portions, and as his Necessities may require."

There can be little doubt that the above quotation,

which is reprinted in the *Gentleman's* for July, 1734, and seems to have hitherto escaped inquiry, refers to none other than the "very negligent" Author of the *Modern Husband* and the *Old Debauchees*—in other words, to Henry Fielding.

CHAPTER II.

MORE PLAYS—MARRIAGE—THE LICENSING ACT.

THE very subordinate part in the *Miser* of "Furnish, an Upholsterer," was taken by a third-rate actor, whose surname has been productive of no little misconception amongst Henry Fielding's biographers. This was Timothy Fielding, sometime member of the Haymarket and Drury Lane companies, and proprietor, for several successive years, of a booth at Bartholomew, Southwark, and other fairs. In the absence of any Christian name, Mr. Lawrence seems to have rather rashly concluded that the Fielding mentioned by Geneste as having a booth at Bartholomew Fair in 1773 with Hippisley (the original Peachum of the *Beggar's Opera*), was Fielding the dramatist; and the mistake thus originated at once began that prosperous course which usually awaits any slip of the kind. It misled one notoriously careful inquirer, who, in his interesting chronicles of Bartholomew Fair, minutely investigated the actor's history, giving precise details of his doings at "Bartlemy" from 1728 to 1736; but, although the theory involved obvious inconsistencies, apparently without any suspicion that the proprietor of the booth which stood, season after season, in the yard of the George Inn at Smithfield, was an entirely different person from his greater namesake. The late Dr. Rimbault car-

ried the story farther still, and attempted to show, in *Notes and Queries* for May, 1859, that Henry Fielding had a booth at Tottenham Court in 1738, "subsequent to his admission into the Middle Temple;" and he also promised to supply additional particulars to the effect that even 1738 was not the "*last* year of Fielding's career as a booth-proprietor." At this stage (probably for good reasons) inquiry seems to have slumbered, although, with the fatal vitality of error, the statement continued (and still continues) to be repeated in various quarters. In 1875, however, Mr. Frederick Latreille published a short article in *Notes and Queries*, proving conclusively, by extracts from contemporary newspapers and other sources, that the Timothy Fielding above referred to was the real Fielding of the fairs; that he became landlord of the Buffalo Tavern "at the corner of Bloomsbury Square" in 1733; and that he died in August, 1738, his Christian name, so often suppressed, being duly recorded in the register of the neighbouring church of St. George's, where he was buried. The admirers of our great novelist owe Mr. Latreille a debt of gratitude for this opportune discovery. It is true that a certain element of Bohemian picturesqueness is lost to Henry Fielding's life, already not very rich in recorded incident; and it would certainly have been curious if he, who ended his days in trying to dignify the judicial office, should have begun life by acting the part of a "trading justice," namely, that of Quorum in Coffey's *Beggar's Wedding*, which Timothy Fielding had played at Drury Lane. But, on the whole, it is satisfactory to know that his early experiences did not, of necessity, include those of a strolling player. Some obscure and temporary connection with Bartholomew Fair he may have had, as Smollett, in the scurrilous pamphlet issued in 1742, makes

him say that he blew a trumpet there in quality of herald to a collection of wild beasts; but this is probably no more than an earlier and uglier form of the apparition laid by Mr. Latreille. The only positive evidence of any connection between Henry Fielding and the Smithfield carnival is, that Theophilus Cibber's company played the *Miser* at their booth in August, 1733.

With the exception of the *Miser* and an afterpiece, never printed, entitled *Deborah; or, A Wife for You All*, which was acted for Miss Raftor's benefit in April, 1733, nothing important was brought upon the stage by Fielding until January of the following year, when he produced the *Intriguing Chambermaid*, and a revised version of the *Author's Farce*. By a succession of changes, which it is impossible here to describe in detail, considerable alterations had taken place in the management of Drury Lane. In the first place, Wilks was dead, and his share in the Patent was represented by his widow. Booth also was dead, and Mrs. Booth had sold her share to Giffard of Goodman's Fields, while the elder Cibber had retired. At the beginning of the season of 1733–34 the leading patentee was an amateur called Highmore, who had purchased Cibber's share. He had also purchased part of Booth's share before his death in May, 1733. The only other shareholder of importance was Mrs. Wilks. Shortly after the opening of the theatre in September, the greater part of the Drury Lane Company, led by the younger Cibber, revolted from Highmore and Mrs. Wilks, and set up for themselves. Matters were farther complicated by the fact that John Rich had not long opened a new theatre in Covent Garden, which constituted a fresh attraction; and that what Fielding called the "wanton affected Fondness for foreign Musick," was making the Italian opera a dangerous

rival—the more so as it was patronised by the nobility. Without actors, the patentees were in serious case. Miss Raftor, who about this time became Mrs. Clive, appears, however, to have remained faithful to them, as also did Henry Fielding. The lively little comedy of the *Intriguing Chambermaid* was adapted from Regnard especially for her; and in its published form was preceded by an epistle in which the dramatist dwells upon the "Factions and Divisions among the Players," and compliments her upon her compassionate adherence to Mr. Highmore and Mrs. Wilks in their time of need. The epistle is also valuable for its warm and generous testimony to the private character of this accomplished actress, whose part in real life, says Fielding, was that of "the best Wife, the best Daughter, the best Sister, and the best Friend." The words are more than mere compliment; they appear to have been true. Madcap and humourist as she was, no breath of slander seems ever to have tarnished the reputation of Kitty Clive, whom Johnson—a fine judge, when his prejudices were not actively aroused—called in addition "the best player that he ever saw."

The *Intriguing Chambermaid* was produced on the 15th of January, 1734. Lettice, from whom the piece was named, was well personated by Mrs. Clive, and Colonel Bluff by Macklin, the only actor of any promise that Highmore had been able to secure. With the new comedy the *Author's Farce* was revived. It would be unnecessary to refer to this again, but for the additions that were made to it. These consisted chiefly in the substitution of Marplay Junior for Sparkish, the actor-manager of the first version. The death of Wilks may have been a reason for this alteration; but a stronger was no doubt the desire to throw ridicule upon Theophilus Cibber, whose

behaviour in deserting Drury Lane immediately after his father had sold his share to Highmore had not passed without censure, nor had his father's action escaped sarcastic comment. Theophilus Cibber—whose best part was Beaumont and Fletcher's Copper Captain, and who carried the impersonation into private life—had played in several of Fielding's pieces; but Fielding had linked his fortunes to those of the patentees, and was consequently against the players in this quarrel. The following scene was accordingly added to the farce for the exclusive benefit of "Young Marplay:"

"*Marplay junior.* Mr. *Luckless*, I kiss your Hands—Sir, I am your most obedient humble Servant; you see, Mr. *Luckless*, what Power you have over me. I attend your Commands, tho' several Persons of Quality have staid at Court for me above this Hour.

"*Luckless.* I am obliged to you—I have a Tragedy for your House, Mr. *Marplay.*

"*Mar. jun.* Ha! if you will send it me, I will give you my Opinion of it; and if I can make any Alterations in it that will be for its Advantage, I will do it freely.

"*Witmore.* Alterations, Sir?

"*Mar. jun.* Yes, Sir, Alterations—I will maintain it, let a Play be never so good, without Alteration it will do nothing.

"*Wit.* Very odd indeed.

"*Mar. jun.* Did you ever write, Sir?

"*Wit.* No, Sir, I thank Heav'n.

"*Mar. jun.* Oh! your humble Servant—your very humble Servant, Sir. When you write yourself you will find the Necessity of Alterations. Why, Sir, wou'd you guess that I had alter'd *Shakespear?*

"*Wit.* Yes, faith, Sir, no one sooner.

"*Mar. jun.* Alack-a-day! Was you to see the Plays when they are brought to us—a Parcel of crude, undigested Stuff. We are the Persons, Sir, who lick them into Form, that mould them into Shape—The Poet make the Play indeed! The Colour-man might be as well said to make the Picture, or the Weaver the Coat: My Father and I, Sir, are a Couple of poetical Tailors; when a Play is brought

us, we consider it as a Tailor does his Coat, we cut it, Sir, we cut it: And let me tell you, we have the exact Measure of the Town, we know how to fit their Taste. The Poets, between you and me, are a Pack of ignorant—

"*Wit.* Hold, hold, Sir. This is not quite so civil to Mr. *Luckless:* Besides, as I take it, you have done the Town the Honour of writing yourself.

"*Mar. jun.* Sir, you are a Man of Sense; and express yourself well. I did, as you say, once make a small Sally into *Parnassus*, took a sort of flying Leap over *Helicon:* But if ever they catch me there again—Sir, the Town have a Prejudice to my Family; for if any Play cou'd have made them ashamed to damn it, mine must. It was all over Plot. It wou'd have made half a dozen Novels: Nor was it cram'd with a pack of Wit-traps, like *Congreve* and *Wycherly*, where every one knows when the Joke was coming. I defy the sharpest Critick of 'em all to know when any Jokes of mine were coming. The Dialogue was plain, easy, and natural, and not one single Joke in it from the Beginning to the End: Besides, Sir, there was one Scene of tender melancholy Conversation, enough to have melted a Heart of Stone; and yet they damn'd it: And they damn'd themselves; for they shall have no more of mine.

"*Wit.* Take pity on the Town, Sir.

"*Mar. jun.* I! No, Sir, no. I'll write no more. No more; unless I am forc'd to it.

"*Luckless.* That's no easy thing, *Marplay.*

"*Mar. jun.* Yes, Sir. Odes, Odes, a Man may be oblig'd to write those you know."

These concluding lines plainly refer to the elder Cibber's appointment as Laureate in 1730, and to those "annual Birth-day Strains," with which he so long delighted the irreverent; while the alteration of Shakspeare and the cobbling of plays generally, satirised again in a later scene, are strictly in accordance with contemporary accounts of the manners and customs of the two dictators of Drury Lane. The piece indicated by Marplay Junior was, probably, Theophilus Cibber's *Lover*, which had

been produced in January, 1731, with very moderate success.

After the *Intriguing Chambermaid* and the revived *Author's Farce*, Fielding seems to have made farther exertions for "the distressed Actors in Drury Lane." He had always been an admirer of Cervantes, frequent references to whose master-work are to be found scattered through his plays; and he now busied himself with completing and expanding the loose scenes of the comedy of *Don Quixote in England*, which (as before stated) he had sketched at Leyden for his own diversion. He had already thought of bringing it upon the stage, but had been dissuaded from doing so by Cibber and Booth, who regarded it as wanting in novelty. Now, however, he strengthened it by the addition of some election scenes, in which—he tells Lord Chesterfield in the dedication—he designed to give a lively representation of "the Calamities brought on a Country by general Corruption;" and it was duly rehearsed. But unexpected delays took place in its production; the revolted players returned to Drury Lane; and, lest the actors' benefits should further retard its appearance by postponing it until the winter season, Fielding transferred it to the Haymarket, where, according to Geneste, it was acted in April, 1734. As a play, *Don Quixote in England* has few stage qualities and no plot to speak of. But the Don with his whimsies, and Sancho with his appetite and string of proverbs, are conceived in something of the spirit of Cervantes. Squire Badger, too, a rudimentary Squire Western, well represented by Macklin, is vigorously drawn; and the song of his huntsman Scut, beginning with the fine line "The dusky Night rides down the Sky," has a verse that re-

calls a practice of which Addison accuses Sir Roger de Coverley:

> "*A brushing Fox in yonder Wood,*
> *Secure to find we seek;*
> *For why, I carry'd sound and good,*
> *A Cartload there last Week.*
> And a Hunting we will go."

The election scenes, though but slightly attached to the main story, are keenly satirical, and considering that Hogarth's famous series of kindred prints belongs to a much later date, must certainly have been novel, as may be gathered from the following little colloquy between Mr. Mayor and Messrs. Guzzle and Retail:

"*Mayor* (to *Retail*). . . . I like an Opposition, because otherwise a Man may be oblig'd to vote against his Party; therefore when we invite a Gentleman to stand, we invite him to spend his Money for the Honour of his Party; and when both Parties have spent as much as they are able, every honest Man will vote according to his Conscience.

"*Guz.* Mr. Mayor talks like a Man of Sense and Honour, and it does me good to hear him.

"*May.* Ay, ay, Mr. *Guzzle*, I never gave a vote contrary to my Conscience. I have very earnestly recommended the Country-Interest to all my Brethren: But before that, I recommended the Town-Interest, that is, the interest of this Corporation; and first of all I recommended to every particular Man to take a particular Care of himself. And it is with a certain way of Reasoning, That he who serves me best, will serve the Town best; and he that serves the Town best, will serve the Country best."

In the January and February of 1735 Fielding produced two more pieces at Drury Lane, a farce and a five-act comedy. The farce—a lively trifle enough—was *An Old Man taught Wisdom*, a title subsequently changed to the *Virgin Unmasked*. It was obviously written to

display the talents of Mrs. Clive, who played in it her favourite character of a hoyden, and, after "interviewing" a number of suitors chosen by her father, finally ran away with Thomas the footman—a course in those days not without its parallel in high life, above stairs as well as below. It appears to have succeeded, though Bookish, one of the characters, was entirely withdrawn in deference to some disapprobation on the part of the audience; while the part of Wormwood, a lawyer, which is found in the latest editions, is said to have been "omitted in representation." The comedy, entitled *The Universal Gallant; or, The different Husbands*, was scarcely so fortunate. Notwithstanding that Quin, who, after an absence of many years, had returned to Drury Lane, played a leading part, and that Theophilus Cibber in the hero, Captain Smart, seems to have been fitted with a character exactly suited to his talents and idiosyncrasy, the play ran no more than three nights. Till the third act was almost over, "the *Audience*," says the *Prompter* (as quoted by "Sylvanus Urban"), "sat quiet, in hopes it would mend, till finding it grew *worse* and *worse*, they lost all Patience, and not an *Expression* or *Sentiment* afterwards pass'd without its deserved *Censure*." Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that the author—"the prolifick *Mr. Fielding*," as the *Prompter* calls him, attributed its condemnation to causes other than its lack of interest. In his *Advertisement* he openly complains of the "cruel Usage" his "poor Play" had met with, and of the barbarity of the young men about town who made "a Jest of damning Plays"—a pastime which, whether it prevailed in this case or not, no doubt existed, as Sarah Fielding afterwards refers to it in *David Simple*. If an author—he goes on to say—"be so unfortunate [*as*] to depend on the success of

his Labours for his Bread, he must be an inhuman Creature indeed, who would out of sport and wantonness prevent a Man from getting a Livelihood in an honest and inoffensive Way, and make a jest of starving him and his Family." The plea is a good one if the play is good; but if not, it is worthless. In this respect the public are like the French Cardinal in the story; and when the famished writer's work fails to entertain them, they are fully justified in doubting his *raison d'être*. There is no reason for supposing that the *Universal Gallant* deserved a better fate than it met with.

Judging from the time which elapsed between the production of this play and that of *Pasquin* (Fielding's next theatrical venture), it has been conjectured that the interval was occupied by his marriage, and brief experience as a Dorsetshire country gentleman. The exact date of his marriage is not known, though it is generally assumed to have taken place in the beginning of 1735. But it may well have been earlier, for it will be observed that in the above quotation from the Preface to the *Universal Gallant*, which is dated from "Buckingham Street, Feb. 12," he indirectly speaks of "his family." This, it is true, may be no more than the pious fraud of a bachelor; but if it be taken literally, we must conclude that his marriage was already so far a thing of the past that he was already a father. This supposition would account for the absence of any record of the birth of a child during his forthcoming residence at East Stour, by the explanation that it had already happened in London; and it is not impossible that the entry of the marriage, too, may be hidden away in some obscure Metropolitan parish register, since those of Salisbury have been fruitlessly searched. At this distance of time, however, speculation is fruitless; and, in default

of more definite information, the "spring of 1735," which Keightley gives, must be accepted as the probable date of the marriage.

Concerning the lady, the particulars are more precise. She was a Miss Charlotte Cradock, one of three sisters living upon their own means at Salisbury, or—as it was then styled—New Sarum. Mr. Keightley's personal inquiries, *circa* 1858, elicited the information that the family, now extinct, was highly respectable, but not of New Sarum's best society. Richardson, in one of his malevolent outbursts, asserted that the sisters were illegitimate; but, says the writer above referred to, "of this circumstance we have no other proof, and I am able to add that the tradition of Salisbury knows nothing of it." They were, however, celebrated for their personal attractions; and if the picture given in chap. ii. book iv. of *Tom Jones* accurately represents the first Mrs. Fielding, she must have been a most charming brunette. Something of the stereotyped characteristics of a novelist's heroine obviously enter into the description; but the luxuriant black hair, which, cut "to comply with the modern Fashion," "curled so gracefully in her Neck," the lustrous eyes, the dimple in the right cheek, the chin rather full than small, and the complexion having "more of the Lilly than of the Rose," but flushing with exercise or modesty, are, doubtless, accurately set down. In speaking of the nose as "exactly regular," Fielding appears to have deviated slightly from the truth; for we learn from Lady Louisa Stuart that, in this respect, Miss Cradock's appearance had "suffered a little" from an accident mentioned in Book II. of *Amelia*, the overturning of a chaise. Whether she also possessed the mental qualities and accomplishments which fell to the lot of Sophia Western, we have no means of determining; but Lady

Stuart is again our authority for saying that she was as amiable as she was handsome.

From the love-poems in the first volume of the *Miscellanies* of 1743—poems which their author declares to have been "Productions of the Heart rather than of the Head"—it is clear that Fielding had been attached to his future wife for several years previous to 1735. One of them, *Advice to the Nymphs of New S——m*, celebrates the charms of Celia—the poetical equivalent for Charlotte—as early as 1730; another, containing a reference to the player Anthony Boheme, who died in 1731, was probably written at the same time; while a third, in which, upon the special intervention of Jove himself, the prize of beauty is decreed by Venus to the Salisbury sisters, may be of an earlier date than any. The year 1730 was the year of his third piece, the *Author's Farce*, and he must therefore have been paying his addresses to Miss Cradock not very long after his arrival in London. This is a fact to be borne in mind. So early an attachment to a good and beautiful girl, living no farther off than Salisbury, where his own father probably resided, is scarcely consistent with the reckless dissipation which has been laid to his charge, although, on his own showing, he was by no means faultless. But it is a part of natures like his to exaggerate their errors in the moment of repentance; and it may be well be that Henry Fielding, too, was not so black as he painted himself. Of his love verses he says—"this Branch of Writing is what I very little pretend to;" and it would be misleading to rate them highly, for, unlike his literary descendant, Mr. Thackeray, he never attained to any special quality of note. But some of his octosyllabics, if they cannot be called equal to Prior's, fall little below Swift's. "I hate"—cries he in one of his pieces—

"I hate the Town, and all its Ways;
Ridotto's, Opera's, and Plays;
The Ball, the Ring, the Mall, the Court;
Wherever the Beau-Monde resort . . .
All Coffee-Houses, and their Praters;
All Courts of Justice, and Debaters;
All Taverns, and the Sots within 'em;
All Bubbles, and the Rogues that skin 'em,"

—and so forth, the natural anti-climax being that he loves nothing but his "Charmer" at Salisbury. In another, which is headed *To Celia.—Occasioned by her apprehending her House would be broke open, and having an old Fellow to guard it, who sat up all Night, with a Gun without any Ammunition*, and from which it has been concluded that the Miss Cradocks were their own landlords, Venus chides Cupid for neglecting to guard her favourite:

"'Come tell me, Urchin, tell no lies;
Where was you hid, in *Vince's* eyes?
Did you fair *Bennet's* Breast importune?
(I know you dearly love a Fortune.)'
Poor *Cupid* now began to whine;
'Mamma, it was no Fault of mine.
I in a Dimple lay *perdue*,
That little Guard-Room chose by you.
A hundred Loves (all arm'd) did grace
The Beauties of her Neck and Face;
Thence, by a Sigh I dispossest,
Was blown to *Harry Fielding's* Breast;
Where I was forc'd all Night to stay,
Because I could not find my Way.
But did Mamma know there what Work
I've made, how acted like a Turk;
What pains, what Torment he endures,
Which no Physician ever cures,
She would forgive.' The Goddess smil'd,
And gently chuck'd her wicked Child,

Bid him go back, and take more Care,
And give her Service to the Fair."

Swift, in his *Rhapsody on Poetry*, 1733, coupled Fielding with Leonard Welsted as an instance of sinking in verse. But the foregoing, which he could not have seen, is scarcely, if at all, inferior to his own *Birthday Poems to Stella.*[1]

The history of Fielding's marriage rests so exclusively upon the statements of Arthur Murphy that it will be well to quote his words in full:

"Mr. Fielding had not been long a writer for the stage, when he married Miss Craddock [*sic*], a beauty from Salisbury. About that time, his mother dying, a moderate estate, at Stower in Dorsetshire, devolved to him. To that place he retired with his wife, on whom he doated, with a resolution to bid adieu to all the follies and intemperances to which he had addicted himself in the career of a town life. But unfortunately a kind of family-pride here gained an ascendant over him; and he began immediately to vie in splendour with the neighbouring country 'squires. With an estate not much above two hundred pounds a-year, and his wife's fortune, which did not exceed fifteen hundred pounds, he encumbered himself with a large retinue of servants, all clad in costly yellow liveries. For their master's honour, these people could not descend so low as to be careful in their apparel, but, in a month or two, were unfit to be seen; the 'squire's dignity required that they should be new-equipped; and his chief pleasure consisting in society and convivial mirth, hospitality threw open his doors, and, in less than three years, entertainments, hounds, and horses, entirely devoured a little patrimony, which, had it been managed with œconomy, might have secured to him a state of independence for the rest of his life," etc.

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[1] Swift afterwards substituted "the laureate [Cibber]" for "Fielding," and appears to have changed his mind as to the latter's merits. "I can assure Mr. *Fielding*," says Mrs. Pilkington in the third and last volume of her *Memoirs* (1754), "the Dean had a high opinion of his Wit, which must be a Pleasure to him, as no Man was ever better qualified to judge, possessing it so eminently himself."

This passage, which has played a conspicuous part in all biographies of Fielding, was very carefully sifted by Mr. Keightley, who came to the conclusion that it was a "mere tissue of error and inconsistency."[1] Without going to this length, we must admit that it is manifestly incorrect in many respects. If Fielding married in 1735 (though, as already pointed out, he may have married earlier, and retired to the country upon the failure of the *Universal Gallant*), he is certainly inaccurately described as "not having been long a writer for the stage," since writing for the stage had been his chief occupation for seven years. Then again his mother had died as far back as April 10, 1718, when he was a boy of eleven; and if he had inherited anything from her, he had probably been in the enjoyment of it ever since he came of age. Furthermore, the statement as to "three years" is at variance with the fact that, according to the dedication to the *Universal Gallant*, he was still in London in February, 1735, and was back again managing the Haymarket in the first months of 1736. Murphy, however, may only mean that the "estate" at East Stour was in his possession for three years. Mr. Keightley's other points — namely, that the "tolerably respectable farmhouse," in which he is supposed to have lived, was scarcely adapted to "splendid entertainments," or "a large retinue of servants;" and that, to be in strict accordance with the family arms, the liveries should have been not "yellow," but white and blue—must be taken for what they are worth. On the whole, the probability is, that Murphy's words were only the careless repetition of local tittle-tattle, of much of which, as Captain Booth

[1] Some of Mr. Keightley's criticisms were anticipated by Watson.

says pertinently in *Amelia*, "the only basis is lying." The squires of the neighbourhood would naturally regard the dashing young gentleman from London with the same distrustful hostility that Addison's "Tory Foxhunter" exhibited to those who differed with him in politics. It would be remembered, besides, that the new-comer was the son of another and an earlier Fielding of less pretensions, and no real cordiality could ever have existed between them. Indeed, it may be assumed that this was the case, for Booth's account of the opposition and ridicule which he—"a poor renter!"—encountered when he enlarged his farm and set up his coach has a distinct personal accent. That he was lavish, and lived beyond his means, is quite in accordance with his character. The man who, as a Bow Street magistrate, kept open house on a pittance, was not likely to be less lavish as a country gentleman, with £1500 in his pocket, and newly married to a young and handsome wife. "He would have wanted money," said Lady Mary, "if his hereditary lands had been as extensive as his imagination;" and there can be little doubt that the rafters of the old farm by the Stour, with the great locust tree at the back, which is figured in Huchins's *History of Dorset*, rang often to hunting choruses, and that not seldom the "dusky Night rode down the Sky" over the prostrate forms of Harry Fielding's guests.[1] But even £1500, and (in spite of Murphy)

[1] An interesting relic of the East Stour residence has recently been presented by Mr. Merthyr Guest (through Mr. R. A. Kinglake) to the Somersetshire Archæological Society. It is an oak table of solid proportions, and bears on a brass plate the following inscription, emanating from a former owner: "This table belonged to Henry Fielding, Esq., novelist. He hunted from East Stour Farm, 1718, and in three years dissipated his fortune keeping hounds."

it is by no means clear that he had anything more, could scarcely last for ever. Whether his footmen wore yellow or not, a few brief months found him again in town. That he was able to rent a theatre may perhaps be accepted as proof that his profuse hospitalities had not completely exhausted his means.

The moment was a favourable one for a fresh theatrical experiment. The stage-world was split up into factions, the players were disorganised, and everything seemed in confusion. Whether Fielding himself conceived the idea of making capital out of this state of things, or whether it was suggested to him by some of the company who had acted *Don Quixote in England*, it is impossible to say. In the first months of 1736, however, he took the little French Theatre in the Haymarket, and opened it with a company which he christened the "Great Mogul's Company of Comedians," who were further described as "having dropped from the Clouds." The "Great Mogul" was a name sometimes given by playwrights to the elder Cibber; but there is no reason for supposing that any allusion to him was intended on this occasion. The company, with the exception of Macklin, who was playing at Drury Lane, consisted chiefly of the actors in *Don Quixote in England;* and the first piece was entitled *Pasquin: a Dramatick Satire on the Times: being the Rehearsal of Two Plays, viz., a Comedy call'd the Election, and a Tragedy call'd the Life and Death of Common-Sense.* The form of this work, which belongs to the same class as Sheridan's *Critic* and Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, was probably determined by Fielding's past experience of

In 1718, it may be observed, Fielding was a boy of eleven. Probably the whole of the latter sentence is nothing more than a distortion of Murphy.

the public taste. His latest comedy had failed, and its predecessors had not been very successful. But his burlesques had met with a better reception, while the election episodes in *Don Quixote* had seemed to disclose a fresh field for the satire of contemporary manners. And in the satire of contemporary manners he felt his strength lay. The success of *Pasquin* proved he had not miscalculated, for it ran more than forty nights, drawing, if we may believe the unknown author of the life of Theophilus Cibber, numerous and enthusiastic audiences "from *Grosvenor*, *Cavendish*, *Hanover*, and all the other fashionable Squares, as also from *Pall Mall*, and the *Inns of Court*."

In regard to plot, the comedy which *Pasquin* contains scarcely deserves the name. It consists of a string of loosely-connected scenes, which depict the shameless political corruption of the Walpole era with a good deal of boldness and humour. The sole difference between the "Court party," represented by two Candidates with the Bunyan-like names of Lord Place and Colonel Promise, and the "Country party," whose nominees as Sir Harry Fox-Chace and Squire Tankard, is that the former bribe openly, the latter indirectly. The Mayor, whose sympathies are with the "Country party," is finally induced by his wife to vote for and return the other side, although they are in a minority; and the play is concluded by the precipitate marriage of his daughter with Colonel Promise. Mr. Fustian, the Tragic Author, who, with Mr. Sneerwell the Critic, is one of the spectators of the rehearsal, demurs to the abruptness with which this ingenious catastrophe is brought about, and inquires where the preliminary action, of which there is not the slightest evidence in the piece itself, has taken place. Thereupon Trapwit, the Comic Author, replies as follows, in one of those

passages which show that, whatever Fielding's dramatic limitations may have been, he was at least a keen critic of stage practice:

"*Trapwit.* Why, behind the Scenes, Sir. What, would you have every Thing brought upon the Stage? I intend to bring ours to the Dignity of the *French* Stage; and I have *Horace's* Advice of my Side; we have many Things both said and done in our Comedies, which might be better perform'd behind the Scenes: The *French*, you know, banish all Cruelty from their Stage; and I don't see why we should bring on a Lady in ours, practising all manner of Cruelty upon her Lover: beside, Sir, we do not only produce it, but encourage it; for I could name you some Comedies, if I would, where a Woman is brought in for four Acts together, behaving to a worthy Man in a Manner for which she almost deserves to be hang'd; and in the Fifth, forsooth, she is rewarded with him for a Husband: Now, Sir, as I know this hits some Tastes, and am willing to oblige all, I have given every Lady a Latitude of thinking mine has behaved in whatever Manner she would have her."

The part of Lord Place in the *Election*, after the first few nights, was taken by Cibber's daughter, the notorious Mrs. Charlotte Charke, whose extraordinary Memoirs are amongst the curiosities of eighteenth-century literature and whose experiences were as varied as those of any character in fiction. She does not seem to have acted in the *Life and Death of Common-Sense*, the rehearsal of which followed that of the *Election*. This is a burlesque of the *Tom Thumb* type, much of which is written in vigorous blank verse. Queen Common-Sense is conspired against by Firebrand, Priest of the Sun, by Law, and by Physic. Law is incensed because she has endeavoured to make his piebald jargon intelligible; Physic because she has preferred Water Gruel to all his drugs; and Firebrand because she would restrain the Power of Priests. Some of the strokes must have gone home to those receptive hearers

who, as one contemporary account informs us, "were dull enough not only to think they contain'd Wit and Humour, but Truth also":

"*Queen Common-Sense.* My Lord of *Law*, I sent for you this morning;
I have a strange Petition given to me;
Two Men, it seems, have lately been at Law
For an Estate, which both of them have lost,
And their Attorneys now divide between them.
"*Law.* Madam, these things will happen in the Law.
"*Q. C. S.* Will they, my Lord? then better we had none:
But I have also heard a sweet Bird sing,
That Men, unable to discharge their Debts
At a short Warning, being sued for them,
Have, with both Power and Will their Debts to pay,
Lain all their Lives in Prison for their Costs.
"*Law.* That may perhaps be some poor Person's Case,
Too mean to entertain your Royal Ear.
"*Q. C. S.* My Lord, while I am Queen I shall not think
One Man too mean, or poor, to be redress'd;
Moreover, Lord, I am inform'd your Laws
Are grown so large, and daily yet encrease,
That the great Age of old *Methusalem*
Would scarce suffice to read your Statutes out."

There is also much more than merely transitory satire in the speech of "Firebrand" to the Queen:

"*Firebrand.* Ha! do you doubt it? nay, if you doubt that,
I will prove nothing—But my zeal inspires me,
And I will tell you, Madam, you yourself
Are a most deadly Enemy to the Sun,
And all his Priests have greatest Cause to wish
You had been never born.
"*Q. C. S.* Ha! say'st thou, Priest?
Then know I honour and adore the Sun!
And when I see his Light, and feel his Warmth,
I glow with flaming Gratitude toward him;

But know, I never will adore a Priest,
Who wears Pride's Face beneath Religion's Mask,
And makes a Pick-Lock of his Piety,
To steal away the Liberty of Mankind.
But while I live, I'll never give thee Power.
"*Firebrand.* Madam, our Power is not deriv'd from you,
Nor any one: 'Twas sent us in a box
From the great Sun himself, and Carriage paid;
Phaeton brought it when he overturn'd
The Chariot of the Sun into the Sea.
"*Q. C. S.* Shew me the Instrument, and let me read it.
"*Fireb.* Madam, you cannot read it, for being thrown
Into the Sea, the Water has no damag'd it,
That none but Priests could ever read it since."

In the end, Firebrand stabs Common-Sense, but her Ghost frightens Ignorance off the Stage, upon which Sneerwell says—"I am glad you make *Common-Sense* get the better at last; I was under terrible Apprehensions for your Moral." "Faith, Sir," says Fustian, "this is almost the only Play where she has got the better lately." And so the piece closes. But it would be wrong to quit it without some reference to the numberless little touches by which, throughout the whole, the humours of dramatic life behind the scenes are ironically depicted. The Comic Poet is arrested on his way from "*King's Coffee-House*," and the claim being "for upwards of Four Pound," it is at first supposed that "he will hardly get Bail." He is subsequently inquired after by a Gentlewoman in a Riding-Hood, whom he passes off as a Lady of Quality, but who, in reality, is bringing him a clean shirt. There are difficulties with one of the Ghosts, who has a "Church-yard Cough," and "is so Lame he can hardly walk the Stage;" while another comes to rehearsal without being properly floured, because the stage barber has gone to Drury Lane

"to shave the Sultan in the New Entertainment." On the other hand, the Ghost of Queen Common-Sense appears before she is killed, and is with some difficulty persuaded that her action is premature. Part of "the Mob" play truant to see a show in the park; Law, straying without the play-house passage, is snapped up by a Lord Chief-Justice's Warrant; and a Jew carries off one of the Maids of Honour. These little incidents, together with the unblushing realism of the Pots of Porter that are made to do duty for wine, and the extra two-pennyworth of Lightning that is ordered against the first night, are all in the spirit of that inimitable picture of the *Strolling Actresses dressing in a Barn*, which Hogarth gave to the world two years later, and which, very possibly, may have borrowed some of its inspiration from Fielding's "dramatic satire."

There is every reason to suppose that the profits of *Pasquin* were far greater than those of any of its author's previous efforts. In a rare contemporary caricature, preserved in the British Museum,[1] the "Queen of Common-Sense" is shown presenting "Henry Fielding, Esq.," with a well-filled purse, while to "Harlequin" (John Rich of Covent Garden) she extends a halter; and in some doggerel lines underneath, reference is made to the "show'rs of Gold" resulting from the piece. This, of course, might be no more than a poetical fiction; but Fielding himself attests the pecuniary success of *Pasquin* in the Dedication to *Tumble-Down Dick*, and Mrs. Charke's statement in her Memoirs that her salary for acting the small part of Lord Place was four guineas a week, "with an Indulgence in Point of Charges at her Benefit" by which she cleared sixty guineas, certainly points to a prosperous exchequer. Fielding's own benefit, as appears from the curious ticket

[1] Political and Personal Satires, No. 2287.

attributed to Hogarth and fac-similed by A. M. Ireland, took place on April 25, but we have no record of the amount of his gains. Mrs. Charke farther says that "soon after *Pasquin* began to droop" Fielding produced Lillo's *Fatal Curiosity*, in which she acted Agnes. This tragedy, founded on a Cornish story, is one of remarkable power and passion; but upon its first appearance it made little impression, although in the succeeding year it was acted to greater advantage in combination with another satirical medley by Fielding, the *Historical Register for the Year* 1736.

Like most sequels, the *Historical Register* had neither the vogue nor the wit of its predecessor. It was only half as long, and it was even more disconnected in character. "Harmonious Cibber," as Swift calls him, whose "preposterous Odes" had already been ridiculed in *Pasquin* and the *Author's Farce*, was once more brought on the stage as Ground-Ivy, for his alterations of Shakspeare; and under the name of Pistol, Theophilus Cibber is made to refer to the contention between his second wife, Arne's sister, and Mrs. Clive, for the honour of playing "Polly" in the *Beggar's Opera*, a play-house feud which at the latter end of 1736 had engaged "the Town" almost as seriously as the earlier rivalry of Faustina and Cuzzoni. This continued raillery of the Cibbers is, as Fielding himself seems to have felt, a "Jest a little overacted;" but there is one scene in the piece of undeniable freshness and humour, to wit, that in which Cock, the famous salesman of the Piazzas—the George Robins of his day—is brought on the stage as Mr. Auctioneer Hen (a part taken by Mrs. Charke). His wares, "collected by the indefatigable Pains of that celebrated Virtuoso, *Peter Humdrum*, Esq.," include such desirable items as "curious Remnants

of Political Honesty," "delicate Pieces of Patriotism," Modesty (which does not obtain a bid), Courage, Wit, and "a very neat clear Conscience" of great capacity, "which has been worn by a Judge, and a Bishop." The "Cardinal Virtues" are then put up, and eighteen-pence is bid for them. But after they have been knocked down at this extravagant sum, the buyer complains that he had understood the auctioneer to say "a Cardinal's Virtues," and that the lot he has purchased includes "Temperance and Chastity, and a Pack of Stuff that he would not give three Farthings for." The whole of this scene is "admirable fooling;" and it was afterwards impudently stolen by Theophilus Cibber for his farce of the *Auction.* The *Historical Register* concludes with a dialogue between Quidam, in whom the audience recognised Sir Robert Walpole, and four patriots, to whom he gives a purse which has an instantaneous effect upon their opinions. All five then go off dancing to Quidam's fiddle; and it is explained that they have holes in their pockets through which the money will fall as they dance, enabling the donor to pick it all up again, "and so not lose one Halfpenny by his Generosity."

The frank effrontery of satire like the foregoing had by this time begun to attract the attention of the Ministry, whose withers had already been sharply wrung by *Pasquin;* and it has been conjectured that the ballet of Quidam and the Patriots played no small part in precipitating the famous "Licensing Act" which was passed a few weeks afterwards. Like the marriage which succeeded the funeral of Hamlet's father, it certainly "followed hard upon." But the reformation of the stage had already been contemplated by the Legislature; and two years before Sir John Barnard had brought in a bill "to restrain

the number of houses for playing of Interludes, and for the better regulating of common Players of Interludes." This, however, had been abandoned, because it was proposed to add a clause enlarging the power of the Lord Chamberlain in licensing plays, an addition to which the introducer of the measure made strong objection. He thought the power of the Lord Chamberlain already too great, and in support of his argument he instanced its wanton exercise in the case of Gay's *Polly*, the representation of which had been suddenly prohibited a few years earlier. But *Pasquin* and the *Register* brought the question of dramatic lawlessness again to the front, and a bill was hurriedly drawn, one effect of which was to revive the very provision that Sir John Barnard had opposed. The history of this affair is exceedingly obscure, and in all probability it has never been completely revealed. The received or authorised version is to be found in Coxe's *Life of Walpole.* After dwelling on the offence given to the Government by *Pasquin*, the writer goes on to say that Giffard, the manager of Goodman's Fields, brought Walpole a farce called *The Golden Rump*, which had been proposed for exhibition. Whether he did this to extort money, or to ask advice, is not clear. In either case, Walpole is said to have "paid the profits which might have accrued from the performance, and detained the copy." He then made a compendious selection of the treasonable and profane passages it contained. These he submitted to independent members of both parties, and afterwards read them in the House itself. The result was that by way of amendment to the "Vagrant Act" of Anne's reign, a bill was prepared limiting the number of theatres, and compelling all dramatic writers to obtain a license from the Lord Chamberlain. Such is Coxe's account;

but notwithstanding its circumstantial character, it has been insinuated in the sham memoirs of the younger Cibber, and it is plainly asserted in the *Rambler's Magazine* for 1787, that certain preliminary details have been conveniently suppressed. It is alleged that Walpole himself caused the farce in question to be written, and to be offered to Giffard, for the purpose of introducing his scheme of reform; and the suggestion is not without a certain remote plausibility. As may be guessed, however, *The Golden Rump* cannot be appealed to. It was never printed, although its title is identical with that of a caricature published in March, 1737, and fully described in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that month. If the play at all resembled the design, it must have been obscene and scurrilous in the extreme.[1]

Meanwhile the new bill, to which it had given rise, passed rapidly through both Houses. Report speaks of animated discussions and warm opposition. But there are no traces of any divisions, or petitions against it, and the only speech which has survived is the very elaborate and careful oration delivered in the Upper House by Lord Chesterfield. The "second Cicero"—as Sylvanus Urban styles him—opposed the bill upon the ground that it would affect the liberty of the press; and that it was practically a tax upon the chief property of men of letters, their wit—a "precarious dependence"—which (he thanked

[1] Horace Walpole, in his *Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II.*, says (vol. i. p. 12), "I have in my possession the imperfect copy of this piece as I found it among my father's papers after his death." He calls it Fielding's; but no importance can be attached to the statement. There is a copy of the caricature in the British Museum Print Room (Political and Personal Satires, No. 2327).

God) my Lords were not obliged to rely upon. He dwélt also upon the value of the stage as a fearless censor of vice and folly; and he quoted with excellent effect but doubtful accuracy the famous answer of the Prince of Conti [Condé] to Molière [Louis XIV.] when *Tartuffe* was interdicted at the instance of M. de Lamoignon: "It is true, Molière, Harlequin ridicules Heaven, and exposes religion; but you have done much worse—you have ridiculed the first minister of religion." This, although not directly advanced for the purpose, really indicated the head and front of Fielding's offending in *Pasquin* and the *Historical Register*, and although in Lord Chesterfield's speech the former is ironically condemned, it may well be that Fielding, whose *Don Quixote* had been dedicated to his Lordship, was the wire-puller in this case, and supplied this very illustration. At all events it is entirely in the spirit of Firebrand's words in *Pasquin:*

> "Speak boldly; by the Powers I serve, I swear
> You speak in Safety, even tho' you speak
> Against the Gods, provided that you speak
> Not against Priests."

But the feeling of Parliament in favour of drastic legislation was even stronger than the persuasive periods of Chesterfield, and on the 21st of June, 1737, the bill received the royal assent.

With its passing Fielding's career as a dramatic author practically closed. In his dedication of the *Historical Register* to "the Publick," he had spoken of his desire to beautify and enlarge his little theatre, and to procure a better company of actors; and he had added—"If Nature hath given me any Talents at ridiculing Vice and Imposture, I shall not be indolent, nor afraid of exerting them, while the

Liberty of the Press and Stage subsists, that is to say, while we have any Liberty left amongst us." To all these projects the "Licensing Act" effectively put an end; and the only other plays from his pen which were produced subsequently to this date were the "Wedding Day," 1743, and the posthumous *Good-Natured Man*, 1779, both of which, as is plain from the Preface to the *Miscellanies*, were amongst his earliest attempts. In the little farce of *Miss Lucy in Town*, 1742, he had, he says, but "a very small Share." Besides these, there are three hasty and flimsy pieces which belong to the early part of 1737. The first of these, *Tumble-Down Dick; or, Phaeton in the Suds*, was a dramatic sketch in ridicule of the unmeaning Entertainments and Harlequinades of John Rich at Covent Garden. This was ironically dedicated to Rich, under his stage name of "John Lun," and from the dedication it appears that Rich had brought out an unsuccessful satire on *Pasquin* called *Marforio*. The other two were *Eurydice*, a profane and pointless farce, afterwards printed by its author (in anticipation of Beaumarchais) "as it was d—mned at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane;" and a few detached scenes in which, under the title of *Eurydice Hiss'd; or, a Word to the Wise*, its untoward fate was attributed to the "frail Promise of uncertain Friends." But even in these careless and half-considered productions there are happy strokes; and one scarcely looks to find such nervous and sensible lines in a mere *à propos* as these from *Eurydice Hiss'd:*

> "Yet grant it shou'd succeed, grant that by Chance,
> Or by the Whim and Madness of the Town,
> A Farce without Contrivance, without Sense
> Should run to the Astonishment of Mankind;
> Think how you will be read in After-times,

When Friends are not, and the impartial Judge
Shall with the meanest Scribbler rank your Name;
Who would not rather wish a *Butler's* fame,
Distress'd, and poor in every thing but Merit,
Than be the blundering Laureat to a Court?"

Self-accusatory passages such as this—and there are others like it—indicate a higher ideal of dramatic writing than Fielding is held to have attained, and probably the key to them is to be found in that reaction of better judgment which seems invariably to have followed his most reckless efforts. It was a part of his sanguine and impulsive nature to be as easily persuaded that his work was worthless as that it was excellent. "When," says Murphy, "he was not under the immediate urgency of want, they, who were intimate with him, are ready to aver that he had a mind greatly superior to anything mean or little; when his finances were exhausted, he was not the most elegant in his choice of the means to redress himself, and he would instantly exhibit a farce or a puppet-shew in the Haymarket theatre, which was wholly inconsistent with the profession he had embarked in." The quotation displays all Murphy's loose and negligent way of dealing with his facts; for, with the exception of *Miss Lucy in Town*, which can scarcely be ranked amongst his works at all, there is absolutely no trace of Fielding's having exhibited either "puppet-shew" or "farce" after seriously adopting the law as a profession, nor does there appear to have been much acting at the Haymarket for some time after his management had closed in 1737. Still, his superficial characteristics, which do not depend so much upon Murphy as upon those "who were intimate with him," are probably accurately described, and they sufficiently account for many of the obvious discordances of his work and life.

That he was fully conscious of something higher than his actual achievement as a dramatist is clear from his own observation in later life, "that he left off writing for the stage, when he ought to have begun;"—an utterance which (we shrewdly suspect) has prompted not a little profitless speculation as to whether, if he had continued to write plays, they would have been equal to, or worse than, his novels. The discussion would be highly interesting, if there were the slightest chance that it could be attended with any satisfactory result. But the truth is, that the very materials are wanting. Fielding "left off writing for the stage" when he was under thirty; *Tom Jones* was published in 1749, when he was more than forty. His plays were written in haste; his novels at leisure, and when, for the most part, he was relieved from that "immediate urgency of want," which, according to Murphy, characterised his younger days. If—as has been suggested—we could compare a novel written at thirty with a play of the same date, or a play written at forty with *Tom Jones*, the comparison might be instructive, although even then considerable allowances would have to be made for the essential difference between plays and novels. But, as we cannot make such a comparison, further inquiry is simply waste of time. All we can safely affirm is, that the plays of Fielding's youth did not equal the fictions of his maturity; and that, of those plays, the comedies were less successful than the farces and burlesques. Among other reasons for this latter difference one chiefly may be given—that in the comedies he sought to reproduce the artificial world of Congreve and Wycherley, while in the burlesques and farces he depicted the world in which he lived.

CHAPTER III.

THE "CHAMPION"—"JOSEPH ANDREWS."

THE *Historical Register* and *Eurydice Hiss'd* were published together in June, 1737. By this time the "Licensing Act" was passed, and the "Grand Mogul's Company" dispersed for ever. Fielding was now in his thirty-first year, with a wife and probably a daughter depending on him for support. In the absence of any prospect that he would be able to secure a maintenance as a dramatic writer, he seems to have decided, in spite of his comparatively advanced age, to revert to the profession for which he had originally been intended, and to qualify himself for the Bar. Accordingly, at the close of the year, he became a student of the Middle Temple, and the books of that society contain the following record of his admission:[1]

[574 G] 1 *Nov*^{ris} 1737.

Henricus Fielding, de East Stour in Com Dorset Ar, filius et hæres apparens Brig: Gen^{lis}*: Edmundi Fielding admissus est in Societatem Medii Templi Lond specialiter et obligatur una cum etc.*

Et dat pro fine 4. 0. 0.

It may be noted, as Mr. Keightley has already observed, that Fielding is described in this entry as of East Stour,

[1] This differs slightly from previous transcripts, having been verified at the Middle Temple.

"which would seem to indicate that he still retained his property at that place;" and further, that his father is spoken of as a "brigadier-general," whereas (according to the *Gentleman's Magazine*) he had been made a major-general in December, 1735. Of discrepancies like these it is idle to attempt any explanation. But, if Murphy is to be believed, Fielding devoted himself henceforth with remarkable assiduity to the study of law. The old irregularity of life, it is alleged, occasionally asserted itself, though without checking the energy of his application. "This," says his first biographer, "prevailed in him to such a degree, that he has been frequently known, by his intimates, to retire late at night from a tavern to his chambers, and there read, and make extracts from, the most abstruse authors, for several hours before he went to bed; so powerful were the vigour of his constitution and the activity of his mind." It is to this passage, no doubt, that we owe the picturesque wet towel and inked ruffles with which Mr. Thackeray has decorated him in *Pendennis;* and, in all probability, a good deal of graphic writing from less able pens respecting his *modus vivendi* as a Templar. In point of fact, nothing is known with certainty respecting his life at this period; and what it would really concern us to learn—namely, whether by "chambers" it is to be understood that he was living alone, and, if so, where Mrs. Fielding was at the time of these protracted vigils—Murphy has not told us. Perhaps she was safe all the while at East Stour, or with her sisters at Salisbury. Having no precise information, however, it can only be recorded that, in spite of the fitful outbreaks above referred to, Fielding applied himself to the study of his profession with all the vigour of a man who has to make up for lost time; and that, when on the 20th of June, 1740, the day

came for his being "called," he was very fairly equipped with legal knowledge. That he had also made many friends amongst his colleagues of Westminster Hall is manifest from the number of lawyers who figure in the subscription list of the *Miscellanies.*

To what extent he was occupied by literary work during his probationary period it is difficult to say. Murphy speaks vaguely of "a large number of fugitive political tracts;" but unless the *Essay on Conversation*, advertised by Lawton Gilliver in 1737, be the same as that afterwards reprinted in the *Miscellanies*, there is no positive record of anything until the issue of *True Greatness*, an epistle to George Dodington, in January, 1741, though he may, of course, have written much anonymously. Among newspapers, the one Murphy had in mind was probably the *Champion*, the first number of which is dated November 15, 1739, two years after his admission to the Middle Temple as a student. On the whole, it seems most likely, as Mr. Keightley conjectures, that his chief occupation in the interval was studying law, and that he must have been living upon the residue of his wife's fortune or his own means, in which case the establishment of the above periodical may mark the exhaustion of his resources.

The *Champion* is a paper on the model of the elder essayists. It was issued, like the *Tatler*, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Murphy says that Fielding's part in it cannot now be ascertained; but as the "Advertisement" to the edition in two volumes of 1741 states expressly that the papers signed C. and L. are the "Work of one Hand," and as a number of those signed C. are unmistakably Fielding's, it is hard to discover where the difficulty lay. The papers signed C. and L. are by far the most numerous, the majority of the remainder being dis-

tinguished by two stars, or the signature "Lilbourne." These are understood to have been from the pen of James Ralph, whose poem of *Night* gave rise to a stinging couplet in the *Dunciad*, but who was nevertheless a man of parts, and an industrious writer. As will be remembered, he had contributed a prologue to the *Temple Beau*, so that his association with Fielding must have been of some standing. Besides Ralph's essays in the *Champion*, he was mainly responsible for the *Index to the Times* which accompanied each number, and consisted of a series of brief paragraphs on current topics, or the last new book. In this way Glover's *London*, Boyse's *Deity*, Somervile's *Hobbinol*, Lillo's *Elmeric*, Dyer's *Ruins of Rome*, and other of the very minor *poetæ minores* of the day, were commented upon. These notes and notices, however, were only a subordinate feature of the *Champion*, which, like its predecessors, consisted chiefly of essays and allegories, social, moral, and political, the writers of which were supposed to be members of an imaginary "Vinegar family," described in the initial paper. Of these the most prominent was Captain Hercules Vinegar, who took all questions relating to the Army, Militia, Trained-Bands, and "fighting Part of the Kingdom." His father, Nehemiah Vinegar, presided over history and politics; his uncle, Counsellor Vinegar, over law and judicature; and Dr. John Vinegar, his cousin, over medicine and natural philosophy. To others of the family — including Mrs. Joan Vinegar, who was charged with domestic affairs — were allotted classic literature, poetry and the Drama, and fashion. This elaborate scheme was not very strictly adhered to, and the chief writer of the group is Captain Hercules.

Shorn of the contemporary interest which formed the chief element of its success when it was first published, it

must be admitted that, in the present year of grace, the *Champion* is hard reading. A kind of lassitude—a sense of uncongenial task-work—broods heavily over Fielding's contributions, except the one or two in which he is quickened into animation by his antagonism to Cibber; and although, with our knowledge of his after achievements, it is possible to trace some indications of his yet unrevealed powers, in the absence of such knowledge it would be difficult to distinguish the *Champion* from the hundred-and-one forgotten imitators of the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, whose names have been so patiently chronicled by Dr. Nathan Drake. There is, indeed, a certain obvious humour in the account of Captain Vinegar's famous club, which he had inherited from Hercules, and which had the enviable property of falling of itself upon any knave in company, and there is a dash of the *Tom Jones* manner in the noisy activity of that excellent housewife Mrs. Joan. Some of the lighter papers, such as the one upon the "Art of Puffing," are amusing enough; and of the visions, that which is based upon Lucian, and represents Charon as stripping his freight of all their superfluous incumbrances in order to lighten his boat, has a double interest, since it contains references not only to Cibber, but also (though this appears to have been hitherto overlooked) to Fielding himself. The "tall Man," who at Mercury's request strips off his "old Grey Coat with great Readiness," but refuses to part with "half his Chin," which the shepherd of souls regards as false, is clearly intended for the writer of the paper, even without the confirmation afforded by the subsequent allusions to his connection with the stage. His "length of chin and nose," sufficiently apparent in his portrait, was a favourite theme for contemporary personalities. Of the moral essays, the most remarkable are a set of four papers,

entitled *An Apology for the Clergy*, which may perhaps be regarded as a set-off against the sarcasms of *Pasquin* on priestcraft. They depict, with a great deal of knowledge and discrimination, the pattern priest as Fielding conceived him. To these may be linked an earlier picture, taken from life, of a country parson who, in his simple and dignified surroundings, even more closely resembles the Vicar of Wakefield than Mr. Abraham Adams. Some of the more general articles contain happy passages. In one there is an admirable parody of the Norman-French jargon, which in those days added superfluous obscurity to legal utterances; while another, on "Charity," contains a forcible exposition of the inexpediency, as well as inhumanity, of imprisonment for debt. References to contemporaries, the inevitable Cibber excepted, are few, and these seem mostly from the pen of Ralph. The following, from that of Fielding, is notable as being one of the earliest authoritative testimonies to the merits of Hogarth: "I esteem (says he) the ingenious *Mr. Hogarth* as one of the most useful Satyrists any Age hath produced. In his excellent Works you see the delusive Scene exposed with all the Force of Humour, and, on casting your Eyes on another Picture, you behold the dreadful and fatal Consequence. I almost dare affirm that those two Works of his, which he calls the *Rake's* and the *Harlot's Progress*, are calculated more to serve the Cause of Virtue, and for the Preservation of Mankind, than all the *Folio's* of Morality which have been ever written; and a sober Family should no more be without them, than without the *Whole Duty of Man* in their House." He returned to the same theme in the Preface to *Joseph Andrews* with a still apter phrase of appreciation: "It hath been thought a vast Commendation of a Painter, to say his Figures seem to breathe; but

surely, it is a much greater and nobler Applause, that they appear to think."[1]

When the *Champion* was rather more than a year old, Colley Cibber published his famous *Apology*. To the attacks made upon him by Fielding at different times he had hitherto printed no reply—perhaps he had no opportunity of doing so. But in his eighth chapter, when speaking of the causes which led to the Licensing Act, he takes occasion to refer to his assailant in terms which Fielding must have found exceedingly galling. He carefully abstained from mentioning his name, on the ground that it could do him no good, and was of no importance; but he described him as "a broken Wit," who had sought notoriety "by raking the Channel" (*i. e.*, Kennel), and "pelting his Superiors." He accused him, with a scandalised gravity that is as edifying as Chesterfield's irony, of attacking "Religion, Laws, Government, Priests, Judges, and Ministers." He called him, either in allusion to his stature, or his pseudonym in the *Champion*, a "*Herculean* Satyrist," a "*Drawcansir* in Wit"—"who, to make his Poetical Fame immortal, like another *Erostratus*, set Fire to his Stage, by writing up to an Act of Parliament to demolish it. I shall not," he continues, "give the particular Strokes of his Ingenuity a Chance to be remembered, by reciting them; it may be enough to say, in general Terms, they were so openly flagrant, that the Wisdom of the Legislature thought it high time to take a proper Notice of them."

[1] Fielding occasionally refers to Hogarth for the pictorial types of his characters. Bridget Allworthy, he tells us, resembled the starched prude in *Morning;* and Mrs. Partridge and Parson Thwackum have their originals in the *Harlot's Progress*. It was Fielding, too, who said that the *Enraged Musician* was "enough to make a man deaf to look at" (*Voyage to Lisbon*, 1755, p. 50).

Fielding was not the man to leave such a challenge unanswered. In the *Champion* for April 22, 1740, and two subsequent papers, he replied with a slashing criticism of the *Apology*, in which, after demonstrating that it must be written in English because it was written in no other language, he gravely proceeds to point out examples of the author's superiority to grammar and learning—and in general, subjects its pretentious and slip-shod style to a minute and highly detrimental examination. In a further paper he returns to the charge by a mock trial of one "Col. *Apol.* (*i. e.*, Colley-*Apology*), arraigning him for that, "not having the Fear of Grammar before his Eyes," he had committed an unpardonable assault upon his mother-tongue. Fielding's knowledge of legal forms and phraseology enabled him to make a happy parody of court procedure, and Mr. Lawrence says that this particular "*jeu d'esprit* obtained great celebrity." But the happiest stroke in the controversy—as it seems to us—is one which escaped Mr. Lawrence, and occurs in the paper already referred to, where Charon and Mercury are shown denuding the luckless passengers by the Styx of their surplus *impedimenta.* Among the rest approaches "an elderly Gentleman with a Piece of wither'd Laurel on his head." From a little book, which he is discovered (when stripped) to have bound close to his heart, and which bears the title of *Love in a Riddle*—an unsuccessful pastoral produced by Cibber at Drury Lane in 1729—it is clear that this personage is intended for none other than the Apologist, who, after many entreaties, is finally compelled to part with his treasure. "I was surprized," continues Fielding, "to see him pass Examination with his Laurel on, and was assured by the Standers by that *Mercury* would have taken it off, if he had seen it."

These attacks in the *Champion* do not appear to have received any direct response from Cibber. But they were reprinted in a rambling production issued from "Curll's chaste press" in 1740, and entitled the *Tryal of Colley Cibber, Comedian*, &c. At the end of this there is a short address to "*the Self-dubb'd Captain* Hercules Vinegar, *alias* Buffoon," to the effect that "the malevolent Flings exhibited by him and his Man *Ralph*," have been faithfully reproduced. Then comes the following curious and not very intelligible "Advertisement":

"If the Ingenious *Henry Fielding* Esq.; (Son of the Hon. Lieut. General *Fielding*, who upon his Return from his Travels entered himself of the *Temple* in order to study the Law, and married one of the pretty Miss *Cradocks of Salisbury*) will *own* himself the AUTHOR of 18 strange Things called Tragical *Comedies* and Comical *Tragedies*, lately advertised by *J. Watts*, of *Wild-Court*, Printer, he shall be *mentioned* in Capitals in the *Third* Edition of Mr. CIBBER'S *Life*, and likewise be placed *among* the *Poetæ minores Dramatici* of the Present Age: Then will both his *Name and Writings be remembered on Record* in the immortal *Poetical Register* written by Mr. GILES JACOB."

The "poetical register" indicated was the book of that name, containing the *Lives and Characteristics of the English Dramatic Poets*, which Mr. Giles Jacob, an industrious literary hack, had issued in 1723. Mr. Lawrence is probably right in his supposition, based upon the foregoing advertisement, that Fielding "had openly expressed resentment at being described by Cibber as 'a broken wit,' without being mentioned by name." He never seems to have wholly forgotten his animosity to the actor, to whom there are frequent references in *Joseph Andrews;* and, as late as 1749, he is still found harping on "the withered laurel" in a letter to Lyttelton. Even in his last work,

the *Voyage to Lisbon*, Cibber's name is mentioned. The origin of this protracted feud is obscure; but, apart from want of sympathy, it must probably be sought for in some early misunderstanding between the two in their capacities of manager and author. As regards Theophilus Cibber, his desertion of Highmore was sufficient reason for the ridicule cast upon him in the *Author's Farce* and elsewhere. With Mrs. Charke, the Laureate's intractable and eccentric daughter, Fielding was naturally on better terms. She was, as already stated, a member of the Great Mogul's Company, and it is worth noting that some of the sarcasms in *Pasquin* against her father were put into the mouth of Lord Place, whose part was taken by this undutiful child. All things considered, both in this controversy and the later one with Pope, Cibber did not come off worst. His few hits were personal and unscrupulous, and they were probably far more deadly in their effects than any of the ironical attacks which his adversaries, on their part, directed against his poetical ineptitude or halting "parts of speech." Despite his superlative coxcombry and egotism, he was, moreover, a man of no mean abilities. His *Careless Husband* is a far better acting play than any of Fielding's, and his *Apology*, which even Johnson allowed to be "well-done," is valuable in many respects, especially for its account of the contemporary stage. In describing an actor or actress he had few equals —witness his skilful portrait of Nokes, and his admirably graphic vignette of Mrs. Verbruggen as that "finish'd Impertinent," Melantha, in Dryden's *Marriage à-la-Mode.*

The concluding paper in the collected edition of the *Champion*, published in 1741, is dated June 19, 1740. On the day following Fielding was called to the Bar by the benchers of the Middle Temple, and (says Mr. Law-

rence) "chambers were assigned him in Pump Court." Simultaneously with this, his regular connection with journalism appears to have ceased, although from his statement in the Preface to the *Miscellanies*—that "as long as from *June*, 1741," he had "desisted from writing one Syllable in the *Champion*, or any other public Paper"—it may perhaps be inferred that up to that date he continued to contribute now and then. This, nevertheless, is by no means clear. His last utterance in the published volumes is certainly in a sense valedictory, as it refers to the position acquired by the *Champion*, and the difficulty experienced in establishing it. Incidentally, it pays a high compliment to Pope, by speaking of "the divine Translation of the *Iliad*, which he [Fielding] has lately with *no Disadvantage to the Translator* COMPARED with the Original," the point of the sentence so impressed by its typography being apparently directed against those critics who had condemned Pope's work without the requisite knowledge of Greek. From the tenor of the rest of the essay it may, however, be concluded that the writer was taking leave of his enterprise; and, according to a note by Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson*, it seems that Mr. Reed of Staple Inn possessed documents which showed that Fielding at this juncture, probably in anticipation of more lucrative legal duties, surrendered the reins to Ralph. The *Champion* continued to exist for some time longer; indeed, it must be regarded as long-lived amongst the essayists, since the issue which contained its well-known criticism on Garrick is No. 455, and appeared late in 1742. But, as far as can be ascertained, it never again obtained the honours of a reprint.

Although, after he was called to the Bar, Fielding practically relinquished periodical literature, he does not seem to have entirely desisted from writing. In Sylvanus Ur-

ban's Register of Books, published during January, 1741, is advertised the poem *Of True Greatness* afterwards included in the *Miscellanies;* and the same authority announces the *Vernoniad*, an anonymous burlesque Epic prompted by Admiral Vernon's popular expedition against Porto Bello in 1739, "with six Ships only." That Fielding was the author of the latter is sufficiently proved by his order to Mr. Nourse (printed in Roscoe's edition), to deliver fifty copies to Mr. Chappel. Another sixpenny pamphlet, entitled *The Opposition, a Vision*, issued in December of the same year, is enumerated by him, in the Preface to the *Miscellanies*, amongst the few works he published "since the End of *June*, 1741;" and, provided it can be placed before this date, he may be credited with a political sermon called the *Crisis* (1741), which is ascribed to him upon the authority of a writer in Nichols's *Anecdotes.* He may also, before "the End of *June*, 1741," have written other things; but it is clear from his *Caveat* in the above-mentioned "Preface," together with his complaint that "he had been very unjustly censured, as well on account of what he had not writ, as for what he had," that much more has been laid to his charge than he ever deserved. Amongst ascriptions of this kind may be mentioned the curious *Apology for the Life of Mr. The' Cibber, Comedian*, 1740, which is described on its title-page as a proper sequel to the autobiography of the Laureate, in whose "style and manner" it is said to be written. But, although this performance is evidently the work of some one well acquainted with the dramatic annals of the day, it is more than doubtful whether Fielding had any hand or part in it. Indeed, his own statement that "he never was, nor would be the Author of *anonymous* Scandal [the italics are ours] on the private History or Family

of any Person whatever," should be regarded as conclusive.

During all this time he seems to have been steadily applying himself to the practice of his profession, if, indeed, that weary hope deferred which forms the usual probation of legal preferment can properly be so described. As might be anticipated from his Salisbury connections, he travelled the Western Circuit; and, according to Hutchins's *Dorset*, he assiduously attended the Wiltshire sessions. He had many friends amongst his brethren of the Bar. His cousin, Henry Gould, who had been called in 1734, and who, like his grandfather, ultimately became a Judge, was also a member of the Middle Temple; and he was familiar with Charles Pratt, afterwards Lord Camden, whom he may have known at Eton, but whom he certainly knew in his barrister days. It is probable, too, that he was acquainted with Lord Northington, then Robert Henley, whose name appears as a subscriber to the *Miscellanies*, and who was once supposed to contend with Kettleby (another subscriber) for the honour of being the original of the drunken barrister in Hogarth's *Midnight Modern Conversation*, a picture which no doubt accurately represents a good many of the festivals by which Henry Fielding relieved the tedium of composing those MS. *folio* volumes on Crown or Criminal Law, which, after his death, reverted to his half-brother, Sir John. But towards the close of 1741 he was engaged upon another work which has outweighed all his most laborious forensic efforts, and which will long remain an English classic. This was *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, published by Andrew Millar in February, 1742.

In the same number, and on the same page of the

Gentleman's Magazine which contains the advertisement of the *Vernoniad*, there is a reference to a famous novel which had appeared in November, 1740, two months earlier, and had already attained an extraordinary popularity. "Several Encomiums (says Mr. Urban) on a Series of *Familiar Letters*, publish'd but last month, entitled PAMELA, or *Virtue Rewarded*, came too late for this Magazine, and we believe there will be little Occasion for inserting them in our next; because a Second Edition will then come out to supply the Demands in the Country, it being judged in town as great a Sign of Want of Curiosity not to have read *Pamela*, as not to have seen the *French* and *Italian* Dancers." A second edition was in fact published in the following month (February), to be speedily succeeded by a third in March and a fourth in May. Dr. Sherlock (oddly misprinted by Mrs. Barbauld as "Dr. Slocock") extolled it from the pulpit; and the great Mr. Pope was reported to have gone farther and declared that it would "do more good than many volumes of sermons." Other admirers ranked it next to the Bible; clergymen dedicated theological treatises to the author; and "even at Ranelagh"—says Richardson's biographer—"those who remember the publication say, that it was usual for ladies to hold up the volumes of Pamela to one another, to shew that they had got the book that every one was talking of." It is perhaps hypercritical to observe that Ranelagh Gardens were not opened until eighteen months after Mr. Rivington's *duodecimos* first made their appearance; but it will be gathered from the tone of some of the foregoing commendations that its morality was a strong point with the new candidate for literary fame; and its voluminous title-page did indeed proclaim at large that it

was "Published in order to cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of Both Sexes." Its author, Samuel Richardson, was a middle-aged London printer, a vegetarian and water-drinker, a worthy, domesticated, fussy, and highly-nervous little man. Delighting in female society, and accustomed to act as confidant and amanuensis for the young women of his acquaintance, it had been suggested to him by some bookseller friends that he should prepare a "little volume of Letters, in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers, who were unable to indite for themselves." As Hogarth's Conversation Pieces grew into his Progresses, so this project seems to have developed into *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded.* The necessity for some connecting link between the letters suggested a story, and the story chosen was founded upon the actual experiences of a young servant girl, who, after victoriously resisting all the attempts made by her master to seduce her, ultimately obliged him to marry her. It is needless to give any account here of the minute and deliberate way in which Richardson filled in his outline. As one of his critics, D'Alembert, has unanswerably said—"*La nature est bonne à imiter, mais non pas jusqu'à l'ennui*" —and the author of *Pamela* has plainly disregarded this useful law. On the other hand, the tedium and elaboration of his style have tended, in these less leisurely days, to condemn his work to a neglect which it does not deserve. Few writers—it is a truism to say so—have excelled him in minute analysis of motive, and knowledge of the human heart. About the final morality of his heroine's long-drawn defence of her chastity it may, however, be permitted to doubt; and, in contrasting the book with Fielding's work, it should not be forgotten

that, irreproachable though it seemed to the author's admirers, good Dr. Watts complained (and with reason) of the indelicacy of some of the scenes.

But, for the moment, we are more concerned with the effect which *Pamela* produced upon Henry Fielding, struggling with the "eternal want of pence, which vexes public men," and vaguely hoping for some profitable opening for powers which had not yet been satisfactorily exercised. To his robust and masculine genius, never very delicately sensitive where the relations of the sexes are concerned, the strange conjunction of purity and precaution in Richardson's heroine was a thing unnatural, and a theme for inextinguishable Homeric laughter. That Pamela, through all her trials, could really have cherished any affection for her unscrupulous admirer would seem to him a sentimental absurdity, and the unprecedented success of the book would sharpen his sense of its assailable side. Possibly, too, his acquaintance with Richardson, whom he knew personally, but with whom he could have had no kind of sympathy, disposed him against his work. In any case, the idea presently occurred to Fielding of depicting a young man in circumstances of similar importunity at the hands of a dissolute woman of fashion. He took for his hero Pamela's brother, and by a malicious stroke of the pen turned the Mr. B. of *Pamela* into Squire Booby. But the process of invention rapidly carried him into paths far beyond the mere parody of Richardson, and it is only in the first portion of the book that he really remembers his intention. After Chapter X. the story follows its natural course, and there is little or nothing of Lady Booby, or her frustrate amours. Indeed, the author does not even pretend to preserve congruity as regards his hero, for, in Chapter V., he makes him tell his mistress that he

has never been in love, while in Chapter XI. we are informed that he had long been attached to the charming Fanny. Moreover, in the intervening letters which Joseph writes to his sister Pamela, he makes no reference to this long-existent attachment, with which, one would think, she must have been perfectly familiar. These discrepancies all point, not so much to negligence on the part of the author, as to an unconscious transformation of his plan. He no doubt speedily found that mere ridicule of Richardson was insufficient to sustain the interest of any serious effort, and, besides, must have been secretly conscious that the "Pamela" characteristics of his hero were artistically irreconcilable with the personal bravery and cudgel-playing attributes with which he had endowed him. Add to this that the immortal Mrs. Slipslop and Parson Adams—the latter especially—had begun to acquire an importance with their creator for which the initial scheme had by no means provided; and he finally seems to have disregarded his design, only returning to it in his last chapters in order to close his work with some appearance of consistency. The *History of Joseph Andrews*, it has been said, might well have dispensed with Lady Booby altogether, and yet, without her, not only this book, but *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* also, would probably have been lost to us. The accident which prompted three such masterpieces cannot be honestly regretted.

It was not without reason that Fielding added prominently to his title-page the name of Mr. Abraham Adams. If he is not the real hero of the book, he is undoubtedly the character whose fortunes the reader follows with the closest interest. Whether he is smoking his black and consolatory pipe in the gallery of the inn, or losing his way whilst he dreams over a passage of Greek, or groaning over the fatuities of the man-of-fashion in Leonora's story, or

brandishing his famous crabstick in defence of Fanny, he is always the same delightful mixture of benevolence and simplicity, of pedantry and credulity and ignorance of the world. He is "compact," to use Shakspeare's word, of the oddest contradictions, the most diverting eccentricities. He has Aristotle's *Politics* at his fingers' ends, but he knows nothing of the daily *Gazetteers;* he is perfectly familiar with the Pillars of Hercules, but he has never even heard of the Levant. He travels to London to sell a collection of sermons which he has forgotten to carry with him, and in a moment of excitement he tosses into the fire the copy of *Æschylus* which it has cost him years to transcribe. He gives irreproachable advice to Joseph on fortitude and resignation, but he is overwhelmed with grief when his child is reported to be drowned. When he speaks upon faith and works, on marriage, on school discipline, he is weighty and sensible; but he falls an easy victim to the plausible professions of every rogue he meets, and is willing to believe in the principles of Mr. Peter Pounce, or the humanity of Parson Trulliber. Not all the discipline of hog's blood and cudgels and cold water to which he is subjected can deprive him of his native dignity; and as he stands before us in the short great-coat under which his ragged cassock is continually making its appearance, with his old wig and battered hat, a clergyman whose social position is scarcely above that of a footman, and who supports a wife and six children upon a cure of twenty-three pounds a year, which his outspoken honesty is continually jeopardising, he is a far finer figure than Pamela in her coach-and-six, or Bellarmine in his cinnamon velvet. If not, as Mr. Lawrence says, with exaggerated enthusiasm, "the grandest delineation of the pattern-priest which the world has yet seen," he is assuredly a noble example of primitive good-

ness and practical Christianity. It is certain—as Mr. Forster and Mr. Keightley have pointed out—that Goldsmith borrowed some of his characteristics for Dr. Primrose, and it has been suggested that Sterne remembered him in more than one page of *Tristram Shandy*.

Next to Parson Adams, perhaps the best character in *Joseph Andrews*—though of an entirely different type—is Lady Booby's "Waiting-Gentlewoman," the excellent Mrs. Slipslop. Her sensitive dignity, her easy changes from servility to insolence, her sensuality, her inimitably distorted vocabulary, which Sheridan borrowed for Mrs. Malaprop, and Dickens modified for Mrs. Gamp, are all peculiarities which make up a personification of the richest humour and the most life-like reality. Mr. Peter Pounce, too, with his "scoundrel maxims," as disclosed in that remarkable dialogue which is said to be "better worth reading than all the Works of *Colley Cibber*," and in which charity is defined as consisting rather in a disposition to relieve distress than in an actual act of relief; Parson Trulliber with his hogs, his greediness, and his willingness to prove his Christianity by fisticuffs; shrewish Mrs. Tow-wouse with her scold's tongue, and her erring but perfectly subjugated husband—these again are portraits finished with admirable spirit and fidelity. Andrews himself, and his blushing sweetheart, do not lend themselves so readily to humorous art. Nevertheless the former, when freed from the wiles of Lady Booby, is by no means a despicable hero, and Fanny is a sufficiently fresh and blooming heroine. The characters of Pamela and Mr. Booby are fairly preserved from the pages of their original inventor. But when Fielding makes Parson Adams rebuke the pair for laughing in church at Joseph's wedding, and puts into the lady's mouth a sententious little speech upon her altered position

in life, he is adding some ironical touches which Richardson would certainly have omitted.

No selection of personages, however, even of the most detailed and particular description, can convey any real impression of the mingled irony and insight, the wit and satire, the genial but perfectly remorseless revelation of human springs of action, which distinguish scene after scene of the book. Nothing, for example, can be more admirable than the different manifestations of meanness which take place amongst the travellers of the stage-coach, in the oft-quoted chapter where Joseph, having been robbed of everything, lies naked and bleeding in the ditch. There is Miss Grave-airs, who protests against the indecency of his entering the vehicle, but, like a certain lady in the *Rake's Progress*, holds the sticks of her fan before her face while he does so, and who is afterwards found to be carrying Nantes under the guise of Hungary-water; there is the lawyer, who advises that the wounded man shall be taken in, not from any humane motive, but because he is afraid of being involved in legal proceedings if they leave him to his fate; there is the wit, who seizes the occasion for a burst of facetious *double-entendres*, chiefly designed for the discomfiture of the prude; and, lastly, there is the coachman, whose only concern is the shilling for his fare, and who refuses to lend either of the useless greatcoats he is sitting upon, lest "they should be made bloody," leaving the shivering suppliant to be clothed by the generosity of the postilion ("a Lad," says Fielding, with a fine touch of satire, "who hath been since transported for robbing a Hen-roost"). This worthy fellow accordingly strips off his only outer garment, "at the same time swearing a great Oath," for which he is duly rebuked by the passengers, "that he would rather ride in

his Shirt all his Life, than suffer a Fellow-Creature to lie in so miserable a Condition." Then there are the admirable scenes which succeed Joseph's admission into the inn; the discussion between the bookseller and the two parsons as to the publication of Adams's sermons, which the "Clergy would be certain to cry down," because they inculcate good works against faith; the debate before the justice as to the manuscript of Æschylus, which is mistaken for one of the Fathers; and the pleasant discourse between the poet and the player which, beginning by compliments, bids fair to end in blows. Nor are the stories of Leonora and Mr. Wilson without their interest. They interrupt the straggling narrative far less than the Man of the Hill interrupts *Tom Jones*, and they afford an opportunity for varying the epic of the highway by pictures of polite society which could not otherwise be introduced. There can be little doubt, too, that some of Mr. Wilson's town experiences were the reflection of the author's own career; while the characteristics of Leonora's lover Horatio—who was "a young Gentleman of a good Family, bred to the Law," and recently called to the Bar, whose "Face and Person were such as the Generality allowed handsome: but he had a Dignity in his Air very rarely to be seen," and who "had Wit and Humour, with an Inclination to Satire, which he indulged rather too much"—read almost like a complimentary description of Fielding himself.

Like Hogarth, in that famous drinking scene to which reference has already been made, Fielding was careful to disclaim any personal portraiture in *Joseph Andrews*. In the opening chapter of Book III. he declares "once for all that he describes not Men, but Manners; not an Individual, but a Species," although he admits that his characters

are "taken from Life." In his "Preface" he reiterates this profession, adding that, in copying from nature, he has "used the utmost Care to obscure the Persons by such different Circumstances, Degrees, and Colours, that it will be impossible to guess at them with any degree of certainty." Nevertheless—as in Hogarth's case—neither his protests nor his skill have prevented some of those identifications which are so seductive to the curious; and it is generally believed—indeed, it was expressly stated by Richardson and others—that the prototype of Parson Adams was a friend of Fielding, the Reverend William Young. Like Adams, he was a scholar and devoted to Æschylus; he resembled him, too, in his trick of snapping his fingers, and his habitual absence of mind. Of this latter peculiarity it is related that on one occasion, when a chaplain in Marlborough's wars, he strolled abstractedly into the enemy's lines with his beloved *Æschylus* in his hand. His peaceable intentions were so unmistakable that he was instantly released, and politely directed to his regiment. Once, too, it is said, on being charged by a gentleman with sitting for the portrait of Adams, he offered to knock the speaker down, thereby supplying additional proof of the truth of the allegation. He died in August, 1757, and is buried in the Chapel of Chelsea Hospital. The obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* describes him as "late of Gillingham, Dorsetshire," which would make him a neighbour of the novelist.[1] Another tradition connects Mr. Peter Pounce with the scrivener and usurer Peter Walter, whom Pope had satirised, and whom Hogarth is thought to have introduced into Plate I. of Marriage *à-la-Mode*. His sister lived at Salisbury; and

[1] Lord Thurlow was accustomed to find a later likeness to Fielding's hero in his *protégé*, the poet Crabbe.

he himself had an estate at Stalbridge Park, which was close to East Stour. From references to Walter in the *Champion* for May 31, 1740, as well as in the *Essay on Conversation*, it is clear that Fielding knew him personally, and disliked him. He may, indeed, have been amongst those county magnates whose criticism was so objectionable to Captain Booth during his brief residence in Dorsetshire. Parson Trulliber, also, according to Murphy, was Fielding's first tutor—Mr. Oliver of Motcombe. But his widow denied the resemblance; and it is hard to believe that this portrait is not overcharged. In all these cases, however, there is no reason for supposing that Fielding may not have thoroughly believed in the sincerity of his attempts to avoid the exact reproduction of actual persons, although, rightly or wrongly, his presentments were speedily identified. With ordinary people it is by salient characteristics that a likeness is established; and no variation of detail, however skilful, greatly affects this result. In our own days we have seen that, in spite of both authors, the public declined to believe that the Harold Skimpole of Charles Dickens, and George Eliot's Dinah Morris, were not perfectly recognisable copies of living originals.

Upon its title-page *Joseph Andrews* is declared to be "written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes," and there is no doubt that, in addition to being subjected to an unreasonable amount of ill-usage, Parson Adams has manifest affinities with Don Quixote. Scott, however, seems to have thought that Scarron's *Roman Comique* was the real model, so far as mock-heroic was concerned; but he must have forgotten that Fielding was already the author of *Tom Thumb*, and that Swift had written the *Battle of the Books*. Resemblances—not of much moment—have also been traced to the *Paysan Parvenu* and the *His-*

toire de Marianne of Marivaux. With both these books Fielding was familiar; in fact, he expressly mentions them, as well as the *Roman Comique*, in the course of his story, and they doubtless exercised more or less influence upon his plan. But in the Preface, from which we have already quoted, he describes that plan; and this, because it is something definite, is more interesting than any speculation as to his determining models. After marking the division of the Epic, like the Drama, into Tragedy and Comedy, he points out that it may exist in prose as well as verse, and he proceeds to explain that what he has attempted in *Joseph Andrews* is "a comic Epic-Poem in Prose," differing from serious romance in its substitution of a "light and ridiculous" fable for a "grave and solemn" one, of inferior characters for those of superior rank, and of ludicrous for sublime sentiments. Sometimes in the diction he has admitted burlesque, but never in the sentiments and characters, where, he contends, it would be out of place. He further defines the only source of the ridiculous to be affectation, of which the chief causes are vanity and hypocrisy. Whether this scheme was an after-thought it is difficult to say; but it is certainly necessary to a proper understanding of the author's method—a method which was to find so many imitators. Another passage in the Preface is worthy of remark. With reference to the pictures of vice which the book contains, he observes: "First, That it is very difficult to pursue a Series of human Actions, and keep clear from them. Secondly, That the Vices to be found here [*i. e.*, *Joseph Andrews*] are rather the accidental Consequences of some human Frailty, or Foible, than Causes habitually existing in the Mind. Thirdly, That they are never set forth as the Objects of Ridicule but Detestation. Fourthly, That they are never the

principal Figure at the Time on the Scene; and, lastly, they never produce the intended Evil." In reading some pages of Fielding it is not always easy to see that he has strictly adhered to these principles; but it is well to recall them occasionally, as constituting at all events the code that he desired to follow.

Although the popularity of Fielding's first novel was considerable, it did not, to judge by the number of editions, at once equal the popularity of the book by which it was suggested. *Pamela*, as we have seen, speedily ran through four editions; but it was six months before Millar published the second and revised edition of *Joseph Andrews;* and the third did not appear until more than a year after the date of first publication. With Richardson, as might be expected, it was never popular at all, and to a great extent it is possible to sympathize with his annoyance. The daughter of his brain, whom he had piloted through so many troubles, had grown to him more real than the daughters of his body, and to see her at the height of her fame made contemptible by what in one of his letters he terms "a lewd and ungenerous engraftment," must have been a sore trial to his absorbed and self-conscious nature, and one which not all the consolations of his consistory of feminine flatterers—"my ladies," as the little man called them—could wholly alleviate. But it must be admitted that his subsequent attitude was neither judicious nor dignified. He pursued Fielding henceforth with steady depreciation, caught eagerly at any scandal respecting him, professed himself unable to perceive his genius, deplored his "lowness," and comforted himself by reflecting that, if he pleased at all, it was because he had learned the art from *Pamela*. Of Fielding's other contemporary critics, one only need be mentioned here, more on

account of his literary eminence than of the special felicity of his judgment. "I have myself," writes Gray to West, "upon your recommendation, been reading *Joseph Andrews*. The incidents are ill laid and without invention; but the characters have a great deal of nature, which always pleases even in her lowest shapes. Parson Adams is perfectly well; so is Mrs. Slipslop, and the story of Wilson; and throughout he [*the author*] shews himself well read in Stage-Coaches, Country Squires, Inns, and Inns of Court. His reflections upon high people and low people, and misses and masters, are very good. However the exaltedness of some minds (or rather as I shrewdly suspect their insipidity and want of feeling or observation) may make them insensible to these light things, (I mean such as characterise and paint nature) yet surely they are as weighty and much more useful than your grave discourses upon the mind, the passions, and what not." And thereupon follows that fantastic utterance concerning the romances of MM. Marivaux and Crébillon *fils*, which has disconcerted so many of Gray's admirers. We suspect that any reader who should nowadays contrast the sickly and sordid intrigue of the *Paysan Parvenu* with the healthy animalism of *Joseph Andrews* would greatly prefer the latter. Yet Gray's verdict, though cold, is not undiscriminating, and is perhaps as much as one could expect from his cloistered and fastidious taste.

Various anecdotes, all more or less apocryphal, have been related respecting the first appearance of *Joseph Andrews*, and the sum paid to the author for the copyright. A reference to the original assignment, now in the Forster Library at South Kensington, definitely settles the latter point. The amount in "lawful Money of Great Britain," received by "Henry Fielding, Esq.," from "Andrew Millar

of St. Clement's Danes in the Strand," was £183 11*s*. In this document, as in the order to Nourse of which a facsimile is given by Roscoe, both the author's name and signature are written with the old-fashioned double f, and he calls himself "Fielding" and not "Feilding," like the rest of the Denbigh family. If we may trust an anecdote given by Kippis, Lord Denbigh once asked his kinsman the reason of this difference. "I cannot tell, my lord," returned the novelist, "unless it be that my branch of the family was the first that learned to spell."

CHAPTER IV.

THE "MISCELLANIES."—"JONATHAN WILD."

In March, 1742, according to an article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, attributed to Samuel Johnson, "the most popular Topic of Conversation" was the *Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Dutchess of Marlborough, from her First Coming to Court, to the Year* 1710, which, with the help of Hooke of the *Roman History*, the "terrible old Sarah" had just put forth. Amongst the little cloud of *Sarah-Ads* and *Old Wives' Tales* evoked by this production, was a *Vindication* of her Grace by Fielding, specially prompted, as appears from the title-page, by the "late *scurrilous* Pamphlet" of a "noble Author." If this were not acknowledged to be from Fielding's pen in the Preface to the *Miscellanies* (in which collection, however, it is not reprinted), its authorship would be sufficiently proved by its being included with *Miss Lucy in Town* in the assignment to Andrew Millar referred to at the close of the preceding chapter. The price Millar paid for it was £5 5*s.*, or exactly half that of the farce. But it is only reasonable to assume that the Duchess herself (who is said to have given Hooke £5000 for his help) also rewarded her champion. Whether Fielding's admiration for the "glorious Woman" in whose cause he had drawn his pen was genuine, or whether—to use Johnson's convenient euphem-

ism concerning Hooke—"he was acting only ministerially," are matters for speculation. His father, however, had served under the Duke, and there may have been a traditional attachment to the Churchills on the part of his family. It has even been ingeniously suggested that Sarah Fielding was her Grace's god-child;[1] but as her mother's name was also Sarah, no importance can be attached to the suggestion.

Miss Lucy in Town, as its sub-title explains, was a sequel to the *Virgin Unmask'd*, and was produced at Drury Lane in May, 1742. As already stated in Chapter II., Fielding's part in it was small. It is a lively but not very creditable trifle, which turns upon certain equivocal London experiences of the Miss Lucy of the earlier piece; and it seems to have been chiefly intended to afford an opportunity for some clever imitation of the reigning Italian singers by Mrs. Clive and the famous tenor Beard. Horace Walpole, who refers to it in a letter to Mann, between an account of the opening of Ranelagh and an anecdote of Mrs. Bracegirdle, calls it "a little simple farce," and says that "Mrs. Clive mimics the Muscovita admirably, and Beard Amorevoli tolerably." Mr. Walpole detested the Muscovita, and adored Amorevoli, which perhaps accounts for the nice discrimination shown in his praise. One of the other characters, Mr. Zorobabel, a Jew, was taken by Macklin, and from another, Mrs. Haycock (afterwards changed to Mrs. Midnight), Foote is supposed to have borrowed Mother Cole in *The Minor*. A third character, Lord Bawble, was considered to reflect upon "a particular person of quality," and the piece was speedily forbidden by the Lord Chamberlain, although it appears to have been acted a few

[1] *Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, etc., by Mrs. A. T. Thomson, 1839.

months later without opposition. One of the results of the prohibition, according to Mr. Lawrence, was a *Letter to a Noble Lord* (the Lord Chamberlain) . . . *occasioned by a Representation . . . of a Farce called "Miss Lucy in Town."* This, in spite of the Caveat in the Preface to the *Miscellanies*, he ascribes to Fielding, and styles it "a sharp expostulation . . . in which he [Fielding] disavowed any idea of a personal attack." But Mr. Lawrence must plainly have been misinformed on the subject, for the pamphlet bears little sign of Fielding's hand. As far as it is intelligible, it is rather against Miss Lucy than for her, and it makes no reference to Lord Bawble's original. The name of this injured patrician seems indeed never to have transpired; but he could scarcely have been in any sense a phenomenal member of the Georgian aristocracy.

In the same month that *Miss Lucy in Town* appeared at Drury Lane, Millar published it in book form. In the following June, T. Waller of the Temple-Cloisters issued the first of a contemplated series of translations from Aristophanes by Henry Fielding, Esq., and the Rev. William Young who sat for Parson Adams. The play chosen was *Plutus, the God of Riches*, and a notice upon the original cover stated that, according to the reception it met with from the public, it would be followed by the others. It must be presumed that "the distressed, and at present, declining State of Learning" to which the authors referred in their dedication to Lord Talbot, was not a mere form of speech, for the enterprise does not seem to have met with sufficient encouragement to justify its continuance, and this special rendering has long since been supplanted by the more modern versions of Mitchell, Frere, and others. Whether Fielding took any large share in it is not now discernible. It is most likely, however, that the bulk of

the work was Young's, and that his colleague did little more than furnish the Preface, which is partly written in the first person, and betrays its origin by a sudden and not very relevant attack upon the "pretty, dapper, brisk, smart, pert Dialogue" of Modern Comedy into which the "infinite Wit" of Wycherley had degenerated under Cibber. It also contains a compliment to the numbers of the "inimitable Author" of the *Essay on Man.*

This is the second compliment which Fielding had paid to Pope within a brief period, the first having been that in the *Champion* respecting the translation of the *Iliad.* What his exact relations with the author of the *Dunciad* were has never been divulged. At first they seem to have been rather hostile than friendly. Fielding had ridiculed the Romish Church in the *Old Debauchees*, a course which Pope could scarcely have approved; and he was, moreover, the cousin of Lady Mary, now no longer throned in the Twickenham Temple. Pope had commented upon a passage in *Tom Thumb*, and Fielding had indirectly referred to Pope in the *Covent Garden Tragedy.* When it had been reported that Pope had gone to see *Pasquin*, the statement had been at once contradicted. But Fielding was now, like Pope, against Walpole; and *Joseph Andrews* had been published. It may therefore be that the compliments in *Plutus* and the *Champion* were the result of some *rapprochement* between the two. It is, nevertheless, curious that, at this very time, an attempt appears to have been made to connect the novelist with the controversy which presently rose out of Cibber's well-known letter to Pope. In August, 1742, the month following its publication, among the pamphlets to which it gave rise, was announced *The Cudgel; or, a Crab-tree Lecture. To the Author of the Dunciad.* "By Hercules Vinegar,

Esq." This very mediocre satire in verse is still to be found at the British Museum; but even if it were not included in Fielding's general disclaimer as to unsigned work, it would be difficult to connect it with him. To give but one reason, it would make him the ally and adherent of Cibber—which is absurd. In all probability, like another Grub Street squib under the same pseudonym, it was by Ralph, who had already attacked Pope, and continued to maintain the Captain's character in the *Champion* long after Fielding had ceased to write for it. It is even possible that Ralph had some share in originating the Vinegar family, for it is noticeable that the paper in which they are first introduced bears no initials. In this case he would consider himself free to adopt the name, however disadvantageous that course might be to Fielding's reputation. And it is clear that, whatever their relations had been in the past, they were for the time on opposite sides in politics, since while Fielding had been vindicating the Duchess of Marlborough, Ralph had been writing against her.

These, however, are minor questions, the discussion of which would lead too far from the main narrative of Fielding's life. In the same letter in which Walpole had referred to *Miss Lucy in Town*, he had spoken of the success of a new player at Goodman's Fields, after whom all the town, in Gray's phrase, was "horn-mad;" but in whose acting Mr. Walpole, with a critical distrust of novelty, saw nothing particularly wonderful. This was David Garrick. He had been admitted a student of Lincoln's Inn a year before Fielding entered the Middle Temple, had afterwards turned wine-merchant, and was now delighting London by his versatility in comedy, tragedy, and farce. One of his earliest theatrical exploits, according to Sir

John Hawkins, had been a private representation of Fielding's *Mock-Doctor*, in a room over the St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, so long familiar to subscribers of the *Gentleman's Magazine;* his fellow-actors being Cave's journeymen printers, and his audience Cave, Johnson, and a few friends. After this he appears to have made the acquaintance of Fielding; and, late in 1742, applied to him to know if he had "any Play by him," as "he was desirous of appearing in a new Part." As a matter of fact Fielding had two plays by him—the *Good-natured Man* (a title subsequently used by Goldsmith), and a piece called *The Wedding Day.* The former was almost finished; the latter was an early work, being indeed "the third Dramatic Performance he ever attempted." The necessary arrangements having been made with Mr. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane, Fielding set to work to complete the *Good-natured Man*, which he considered the better of the two. When he had done so, he came to the conclusion that it required more attention than he could give it; and, moreover, that the part allotted to Garrick, although it satisfied the actor, was scarcely important enough. He accordingly reverted to the *Wedding Day*, the central character of which had been intended for Wilks. It had many faults, which none saw more clearly than the author himself, but he hoped that Garrick's energy and *prestige* would triumphantly surmount all obstacles. He hoped, as well, to improve it by revision. The dangerous illness of his wife, however, made it impossible for him to execute his task; and, as he was pressed for money, the *Wedding Day* was produced on the 17th of February, 1743, apparently much as it had been first written some dozen years before. As might be anticipated, it was not a success. The character of Millamour is one which it is hard to be-

lieve that even Garrick could have made attractive, and though others of the parts were entrusted to Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Pritchard, and Macklin, it was acted but six nights. The author's gains were under £50. In the Preface to the *Miscellanies*, from which most of the foregoing account is taken, Fielding, as usual, refers its failure to other causes than its inherent defects. Rumours, he says, had been circulated as to its indecency (and in truth some of the scenes are more than hazardous); but it had passed the licenser, and must be supposed to have been up to the moral standard of the time. Its unfavourable reception, as Fielding must have known in his heart, was due to its artistic shortcomings, and also to the fact that a change was taking place in the public taste. It is in connection with the *Wedding Day* that one of the best-known anecdotes of the author is related. Garrick had begged him to retrench a certain objectionable passage. This Fielding, either from indolence or unwillingness, declined to do, asserting that if it was not good, the audience might find it out. The passage was promptly hissed, and Garrick returned to the green-room, where the author was solacing himself with a bottle of champagne. "What is the matter, Garrick?" said he to the flustered actor; "what are they hissing now?" He was informed with some heat that they had been hissing the very scene he had been asked to withdraw, "and," added Garrick, "they have so frightened me, that I shall not be able to collect myself again the whole night."—"Oh!" answered the author, with an oath, "they HAVE found it out, have they?" This rejoinder is usually quoted as an instance of Fielding's contempt for the intelligence of his audience; but nine men in ten, it may be observed, would have said something of the same sort.

The only other thing which need be referred to in connection with this comedy—the last of his own dramatic works which Fielding ever witnessed upon the stage—is Macklin's doggerel Prologue. Mr. Lawrence attributes this to Fielding; but he seems to have overlooked the fact that in the *Miscellanies* it is headed, "*Writ* and Spoken by Mr. Macklin," which gives it more interest as the work of an outsider than if it had been a mere laugh by the author at himself. Garrick is represented as too busy to speak the prologue; and Fielding, who has been "drinking to raise his Spirits," has begged Macklin, with his "long, dismal, Mercy-begging Face," to go on and apologise. Macklin then pretends to recognise him among the audience, and pokes fun at his anxieties, telling him that he had better have stuck to "honest *Abram Adams*," who, "in spight of Critics, can make his Readers laugh." The words "in spite of critics" indicate another distinction between Fielding's novels and plays, which should have its weight in any comparison of them. The censors of the pit, in the eighteenth century, seem to have exercised an unusual influence in deciding whether a play should succeed or not;[1] and, from Fielding's frequent references to friends and enemies, it would almost seem as if he believed their suffrages to be more important than a good plot and a witty dialogue. On the other hand, no coterie of Wits and Templars could kill a book like *Joseph Andrews*. To say nothing of the opportunities afforded by the novel for more leisurely character-drawing, and greater by-play of reflection and description, its reader was an isolated and independent judge; and in the long run the

[1] Miller's *Coffee-House*, 1737, for example, was damned by the Templars because it was supposed to reflect on the keepers of "Dick's." —*Biog. Dramatica.*

difference told wonderfully in favour of the author. Macklin was obviously right in recommending Fielding, even in jest, to stick to Parson Adams, and from the familiar publicity of the advice it may also be inferred, not only that the opinion was one commonly current, but that the novel was unusually popular.

The *Wedding Day* was issued separately in February, 1743. It must therefore be assumed that the three volumes of *Miscellanies*, by Henry Fielding, Esq., in which it was reprinted, and to which reference has so often been made in these pages, did not appear until later.[1] They were published by subscription; and the list, in addition to a large number of aristocratic and legal names, contains some of more permanent interest. Side by side with the Chesterfields and Marlboroughs and Burlingtons and Denbighs, come William Pitt and Henry Fox, Esqs., with Dodington and Winnington and Hanbury Williams. The theatrical world is well represented by Garrick and Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Clive. Literature has no names of any eminence except that of Young; for Savage and Whitehead, Mallet and Benjamin Hoadly, are certainly *ignes minores*. Pope is conspicuous for his absence; so also are Horace Walpole and Gray, while Richardson, of course, is wanting. Johnson, as yet only the author of *London*, and journeyman to Cave, could scarcely be expected in the roll; and, in any case, his friendship for the author of *Pamela* would probably have kept him away. Among some other well-known eighteenth century names are those of Dodsley and Millar the booksellers, and the famous Vauxhall *impresario* Jonathan Tyers.

The first volume of the *Miscellanies*, besides a lengthy

[1] By advertisement in the *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, they would seem to have been published early in April, 1743.

Preface, includes the author's poems, essays *On Conversation*, *On the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, *On Nothing*, a squib upon the Transactions of the Royal Society, a translation from Demosthenes, and one or two minor pieces. Much of the biographical material contained in the Preface has already been made use of, as well as those verses which can be definitely dated, or which relate to the author's love-affairs. The hitherto unnoticed portions of the volume consist chiefly of Epistles, in the orthodox eighteenth century fashion. One—already referred to—is headed *Of True Greatness;* another, inscribed to the Duke of Richmond, *Of Good-nature;* while a third is addressed to a friend, *On the Choice of a Wife.* This last contains some sensible lines, but although Roscoe has managed to extract two quotable passages, it is needless to imitate him here. These productions show no trace of the authentic Fielding. The essays are more remarkable, although, like Montaigne's, they are scarcely described by their titles. That on *Conversation* is really a little treatise on good-breeding; that on the *Characters of Men*, a lay sermon against Fielding's pet antipathy—hypocrisy. Nothing can well be wiser, even now, than some of the counsels in the former of these papers on such themes as the limits of raillery, the duties of hospitality, and the choice of subject in general conversation. Nor, however threadbare they may look to-day, can the final conclusions be reasonably objected to: "First, That every Person who indulges his Ill-nature or Vanity, at the Expense of others; and in introducing Uneasiness, Vexation, and Confusion into Society, however exalted or high-titled he may be, is thoroughly ill-bred;" and "Secondly, That whoever, from the Goodness of his Disposition or Understanding, endeavours to his utmost to culti-

vate the Good-humour and Happiness of others, and to contribute to the Ease and Comfort of all his Acquaintance, however low in Rank Fortune may have placed him, or however clumsy he may be in his Figure or Demeanour, hath, in the truest sense of the Word, a Claim to Good-Breeding." One fancies that this essay must have been a favourite with the historian of the *Book of Snobs* and the creator of Major Dobbin.

The *Characters of Men* is not equal to the *Conversation.* The theme is a wider one; and the end proposed—that of supplying rules for detecting the real disposition through all the social disguises which cloak and envelop it—can scarcely be said to be attained. But there are happy touches even in this; and when the author says, "I will venture to affirm, that I have known some of *the best sort of Men in the World* (to use the vulgar Phrase,) who would not have scrupled cutting a Friend's Throat; and *a Fellow whom no Man should be seen to speak to*, capable of the highest Acts of Friendship and Benevolence," one recognises the hand that made the sole good Samaritan in *Joseph Andrews* "a Lad who hath since been transported for robbing a Hen-roost." The account of the Terrestrial Chrysipus or Guinea, a burlesque on a paper read before the Royal Society on the Fresh Water Polypus, is chiefly interesting from the fact that it is supposed to be written by Petrus Gualterus (Peter Walter), who had an "extraordinary Collection" of them. He died, in fact, worth £300,000. The only other paper in the volume of any value is a short one, *Of the Remedy of Affliction for the Loss of our Friends*, to which we shall presently return.

The farce of *Eurydice*, and the *Wedding Day*, which, with *A Journey from this World to the Next*, etc., make

up the contents of the second volume of the *Miscellanies*, have been already sufficiently discussed. But the *Journey* deserves some further notice. It has been suggested that this curious Lucianic production may have been prompted by the vision of Mercury and Charon in the *Champion*, though the kind of allegory of which it consists is common enough with the elder essayists; and it is notable that another book was published in April, 1743, under the title of *Cardinal Fleury's Journey to the other World*, which is manifestly suggested by Quevedo. Fielding's *Journey*, however, is a fragment which the author feigns to have found in the garret of a stationer in the Strand. Sixteen out of five-and-twenty chapters in Book I. are occupied with the transmigrations of Julian the Apostate, which are not concluded. Then follows another chapter from Book XIX., which contains the history of Anna Boleyn, and the whole breaks off abruptly. Its best portion is undoubtedly the first ten chapters, which relate the writer's progress to Elysium, and afford opportunity for many strokes of satire. Such are the whimsical terror of the spiritual traveller in the stage-coach, who hears suddenly that his neighbour has died of small-pox, a disease he had been dreading all his life; and the punishment of Lord Scrape, the miser, who is doomed to dole out money to all comers, and who, after "being purified in the Body of a Hog," is ultimately to return to earth again. Nor is the delight of some of those who profit by his enforced assistance less keenly realised: "I remarked a poetical Spirit in particular, who swore he would have a hearty Gripe at him: 'For, says he, the Rascal not only refused to subscribe to my Works; but sent back my Letter unanswered, tho' I'm a better Gentleman than himself.'" The descriptions of the City of Diseases, the Palace of Death,

and the Wheel of Fortune from which men draw their chequered lots, are all unrivalled in their way. But here, as always, it is in his pictures of human nature that Fielding shines, and it is this that makes the chapters in which Minos is shown adjudicating upon the separate claims of the claimants to enter Elysium the most piquant of all. The virtuoso and butterfly hunter, who is repulsed "with great Scorn;" the dramatic author who is admitted (to his disgust), not on account of his works, but because he has once lent "the whole Profits of a Benefit Night to a Friend;" the parson who is turned back, while his poor parishioners are admitted; and the trembling wretch who has been hanged for a robbery of eighteen-pence, to which he had been driven by poverty, but whom the judge welcomes cordially because he had been a kind father, husband, and son; all these are conceived in that humane and generous spirit which is Fielding's most engaging characteristic. The chapter immediately following, which describes the literary and other inhabitants of Elysium, is even better. Here is Leonidas, who appears to be only moderately gratified with the honour recently done him by Mr. Glover the poet; here is Homer, toying with Madame Dacier, and profoundly indifferent as to his birthplace and the continuity of his poems; here, too, is Shakspeare, who, foreseeing future commentators and the "New Shakespere Society," declines to enlighten Betterton and Booth as to a disputed passage in his works, adding, "I marvel nothing so much as that Men will gird themselves at discovering obscure Beauties in an Author. Certes the greatest and most pregnant Beauties are ever the plainest and most evidently striking; and when two Meanings of a Passage can in the least ballance our Judgements which to prefer, I hold it matter of unquestionable Certainty that

neither is worth a farthing." Then, again, there are Addison and Steele, who are described with so pleasant a knowledge of their personalities that, although the passage has been often quoted, there seems to be no reason why it should not be quoted once more:

"*Virgil* then came up to me, with Mr. *Addison* under his Arm. Well, Sir, said he, how many Translations have these few last Years produced of my *Æneid?* I told him, I believed several, but I could not possibly remember; for I had never read any but Dr. *Trapp's*.[1]—Ay, said he, that is a curious Piece indeed! I then acquainted him with the Discovery made by Mr. *Warburton* of the *Eleusinian* Mysteries couched in his 6th Book. What Mysteries? said Mr. *Addison*. The *Eleusinian*, answered *Virgil*, which I have disclosed in my 6th Book. How! replied *Addison*. You never mentioned a word of any such Mysteries to me in all our Acquaintance. I thought it was unnecessary, cried the other, to a Man of your infinite Learning: besides, you always told me, you perfectly understood my meaning. Upon this I thought the Critic looked a little out of countenance, and turned aside to a very merry Spirit, one *Dick Steele*, who embraced him, and told him, He had been the greatest Man upon Earth; that he readily resigned up all the Merit of his own Works to him. Upon which, *Addison* gave him a gracious Smile, and clapping him on the Back with much Solemnity, cried out, *Well said, Dick.*"

After encountering these and other notabilities, including Tom Thumb and Livy, the latter of whom takes occasion to commend the ingenious performances of Lady Marlborough's assistant, Mr. Hooke, the author meets with Julian the Apostate, and from this point the narrative grows languid. Its unfinished condition may perhaps be accepted as a proof that Fielding himself had wearied of his scheme.

The third volume of the *Miscellanies* is wholly occupied with the remarkable work entitled the *History of the Life of the late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great.* As in the case of the *Journey from this World to the Next*, it is not

[1] Dr. Trapp's translation of the *Æneid* was published in 1718.

unlikely that the first germ of this may be found in the pages of the *Champion*. "Reputation"—says Fielding in one of the essays in that periodical—"often courts those most who regard her the least. Actions have sometimes been attended with Fame, which were undertaken in Defiance of it. *Jonathan Wyld* himself had for many years no small Share of it in this Kingdom." The book now under consideration is the elaboration of the idea thus casually thrown out. Under the name of a notorious thief-taker hanged at Tyburn in 1725, Fielding has traced the Progress of a Rogue to the Gallows, showing by innumerable subtle touches that the (so-called) greatness of a villain does not very materially differ from any other kind of greatness, which is equally independent of goodness. This continually suggested affinity between the ignoble and the pseudo-noble is the text of the book. Against genuine worth (its author is careful to explain) his satire is in no wise directed. He is far from considering "*Newgate* as no other than Human Nature with its Mask off;" but he thinks "we may be excused for suspecting that the splendid Palaces of the Great are often no other than *Newgate* with the Mask on." Thus *Jonathan Wild the Great* is a prolonged satire upon the spurious eminence in which benevolence, honesty, charity, and the like have no part; or, as Fielding prefers to term it, that false or "Bombast greatness" which is so often mistaken for the "*true Sublime* in Human Nature"—Greatness and Goodness combined. So thoroughly has he explained his intention in the Prefaces to the *Miscellanies*, and to the book itself, that it is difficult to comprehend how Scott could fail to see his drift. Possibly, like some others, he found the subject repugnant and painful to his kindly nature. Possibly, too, he did not, for this reason,

study the book very carefully, for, with the episode of Heartfree under one's eyes, it is not strictly accurate to say (as he does) that it presents "a picture of complete vice, *unrelieved by anything of human feeling*, and never by any accident even deviating into virtue." If the author's introduction be borne in mind, and if the book be read steadily in the light there supplied, no one can refrain from admiring the extraordinary skill and concentration with which the plan is pursued, and the adroitness with which, at every turn, the villainy of Wild is approximated to that of those securer and more illustrious criminals with whom he is so seldom confused. And Fielding has never carried one of his chief and characteristic excellences to so great perfection: the book is a model of sustained and sleepless irony. To make any extracts from it —still less to make any extracts which should do justice to it—is almost impracticable; but the edifying discourse between Wild and Count La Ruse in Book I., and the pure comedy of that in Book IV. with the Ordinary of Newgate (who objects to wine, but drinks punch because "it is no where spoken against in Scripture"), as well as the account of the prison faction between Wild and Johnson,[1] with its admirable speech of the "grave Man" against

[1] Some critics at this point appear to have identified Johnson and Wild with Lord Wilmington and Sir Robert Walpole (who resigned in 1742), while Mr. Keightley suspects that Wild throughout typifies Walpole. But, in his advertisement to the edition of 1754, Fielding expressly disclaims any such "personal Application." "The Truth is (he says), as a very corrupt State of Morals is here represented, the Scene seems very properly to have been laid in *Newgate:* Nor do I see any Reason for introducing any allegory at all; unless we will agree that there are, without those Walls, some other Bodies of Men of worse Morals than those within; and who have, consequently, a Right to change Places with its present Inhabitants."

Party, may all be cited as examples of its style and method. Nor should the character of Wild in the last chapter, and his famous rules of conduct, be neglected. It must be admitted, however, that the book is not calculated to suit the nicely-sensitive in letters; or, it may be added, those readers for whom the evolution of a purely intellectual conception is either unmeaning or uninteresting. Its place in Fielding's works is immediately after his three great novels, and this is more by reason of its subject than its workmanship, which could hardly be excelled. When it was actually composed is doubtful. If it may be connected with the already-quoted passage in the *Champion*, it must be placed after March, 1740, which is the date of the paper; but, from a reference to Peter Pounce in Book II., it might also be supposed to have been written after *Joseph Andrews*. The Bath simile in Chapter XIV., Book I., makes it likely that some part of it was penned at that place, where, from an epigram in the *Miscellanies* "written *Extempore* in the Pump Room," it is clear that Fielding was staying in 1742. But, whenever it was completed, we are inclined to think that it was planned and begun before *Joseph Andrews* was published, as it is in the highest degree improbable that Fielding, always carefully watching the public taste, would have followed up that fortunate adventure in a new direction by a work so entirely different from it as *Jonathan Wild*.

A second edition of the *Miscellanies* appeared in the same year as the first, namely, in 1743. From this date until the publication of *Tom Jones* in 1749, Fielding produced no work of signal importance, and his personal history for the next few years is exceedingly obscure. We are inclined to suspect that this must have been the most trying period of his career. His health was shattered, and

he had become a martyr to gout, which seriously interfered with the active practice of his profession. Again, "about this time," says Murphy vaguely, after speaking of the *Wedding Day*, he lost his first wife. That she was alive in the winter of 1742–3 is clear, for, in the Preface to the *Miscellanies*, he describes himself as being then laid up, "with a favourite Child dying in one Bed, and my Wife in a Condition very little better, on another, attended with other Circumstances, which served as very proper Decorations to such a Scene"—by which Mr. Keightley no doubt rightly supposes him to refer to writs and bailiffs. It must also be assumed that Mrs. Fielding was alive when the Preface was written, since, in apologising for an apparent delay in publishing the book, he says the "real Reason" was "the dangerous Illness of one from whom I *draw* [the italics are ours] all the solid Comfort of my Life." There is another unmistakable reference to her in one of the minor papers in the first volume, viz., that *Of the Remedy of Affliction for the Loss of our Friends.* "I remember the most excellent of Women, and tenderest of Mothers, when, after a painful and dangerous Delivery, she was told she had a Daughter, answering: *Good God! have I produced a Creature who is to undergo what I have suffered!* Some Years afterwards, I heard the same Woman, on the Death of that very Child, then one of the loveliest Creatures ever seen, comforting herself with reflecting, that *her Child could never know what it was to feel such a Loss as she then lamented.*" Were it not for the passages already quoted from the Preface, it might almost be concluded from the tone of that foregoing quotation and the final words of the paper, which refer to our meeting with those we have lost in Heaven, that Mrs. Fielding was already dead. But the use of the word "draw" in the Preface affords distinct evi-

dence to the contrary. It is therefore most probable that she died in the latter part of 1743, having been long in a declining state of health. For a time her husband was inconsolable. "The fortitude of mind," says Murphy, "with which he met all the other calamities of life, deserted him on this most trying occasion." His grief was so vehement "that his friends began to think him in danger of losing his reason."

That Fielding had depicted his first wife in Sophia Western has already been pointed out, and we have the authority of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Richardson for saying that she was afterwards reproduced in *Amelia*. "Amelia," says the latter, in a letter to Mrs. Donnellan, "even to her *noselessness*, is again his first wife." Some of her traits, too, are to be detected in the Mrs. Wilson of *Joseph Andrews*. But, beyond these indications, we hear little about her. Almost all that is definitely known is contained in a passage of the admirable *Introductory Anecdotes* contributed by Lady Louisa Stuart in 1837 to Lord Wharncliffe's edition of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters and Works*. This account was based upon the recollections of Lady Bute, Lady Mary's daughter:

"Only those persons (says Lady Stuart) are mentioned here of whom Lady Bute could speak from her own recollection or her mother's report. Both had made her well informed of every particular that concerned her relation Henry Fielding; nor was she a stranger to that beloved first wife whose picture he drew in his Amelia, where, as she said, even the glowing language he knew how to employ did not do more than justice to the amiable qualities of the original, or to her beauty, although this had suffered a little from the accident related in the novel—a frightful overturn, which destroyed the gristle of her nose.[1] He loved her passionately, and she returned his affec-

[1] That any one could have remained lovely after such a catastrophe

tion; yet led no happy life, for they were almost always miserably poor, and seldom in a state of quiet and safety. All the world knows what was his imprudence; if ever he possessed a score of pounds, nothing could keep him from lavishing it idly, or make him think of to-morrow. Sometimes they were living in decent lodgings with tolerable comfort; sometimes in a wretched garret without necessaries; not to speak of the spunging-houses and hiding-places where he was occasionally to be found. His elastic gaiety of spirit carried him through it all; but, meanwhile, care and anxiety were preying upon her more delicate mind, and undermining her constitution. She gradually declined, caught a fever, and died in his arms."

As usual, Mr. Keightley has done his best to test this statement to the utmost. Part of his examination may be neglected, because it is based upon the misconception that Lord Wharncliffe, Lady Mary's greatgrandson, and not Lady Stuart, her granddaughter, was the writer of the foregoing account. But as a set-off to the extreme destitution alleged, Mr. Keightley very justly observes that Mrs. Field-

is difficult to believe. But probably Lady Bute (or Lady Stuart) exaggerated its effects; for—to say nothing of the fact that, throughout the novel, Amelia's beauty is continually commended—in the delightfully feminine description which is given of her by Mrs. James in Book XI., Chap. I., pp. 114–15, of the first edition of 1752, although she is literally pulled to pieces, there is no reference whatever to her nose, which may be taken as proof positive that it was not an assailable feature. Moreover, in the book as we now have it, Fielding, obviously in deference to contemporary criticism, inserted the following specific passages: "She was, indeed, a most charming woman; and I know not whether the little scar on her nose did not rather add to, than diminish her beauty" (Book IV., Chap. VII.); and in Mrs. James's portrait: "Then her nose, as well proportioned as it is, has a visible scar on one side." No previous biographer seems to have thought it necessary to make any mention of these statements, while Johnson's speech about "That vile broken nose, *never cured*," and Richardson's coarsely-malignant utterance to Mrs. Donnellan, are everywhere industriously remembered and repeated.

ing must for some time have had a maid, since it was a maid who had been devotedly attached to her whom Fielding subsequently married. He also argues that "living in a garret and skulking in out o' the way retreats," are incompatible with studying law and practising as a barrister. Making every allowance, however, for the somewhat exaggerated way in which those of high rank often speak of the distresses of their less opulent kinsfolk, it is probable that Fielding's married life was one of continual shifts and privations. Such a state of things is completely in accordance with his profuse nature[1] and his precarious means. Of his family by the first Mrs. Fielding no very material particulars have been preserved. Writing, in November, 1745, in the *True Patriot*, he speaks of having a son and a daughter, but no son by his first wife seems to have survived him. The late Colonel Chester found the burial of a "James Fielding, son of Henry Fielding," recorded under date of 19th February, 1736, in the register of St. Giles in the Fields; but it is by no means certain that this entry refers to the novelist. A daughter, Eleanor Harriot, certainly did survive him, for she is mentioned in the *Voyage to Lisbon* as being of the party who accompanied him. Another daughter, as already stated, probably died in the winter of 1742–3; and the *Journey from this World to the Next* contains the touching reference to this or another child, of which Dickens writes so warmly in one of his letters. "I presently," says Fielding, speaking of his entrance into Elysium, "met a little Daughter, whom I had lost several Years before. Good Gods! what Words can describe the Raptures, the melting passionate Tenderness, with which we kiss'd each other, continuing in our Embrace,

[1] The passage as to his imprudence is, oddly enough, omitted from Mr. Keightley's quotation.

with the most extatic Joy, a Space, which if Time had been measured here as on Earth, could not have been less than half a Year."

From the death of Mrs. Fielding until the publication of the *True Patriot* in 1745 another comparative blank ensues in Fielding's history; and it can only be filled by the assumption that he was still endeavouring to follow his profession as a barrister. His literary work seems to have been confined to a Preface to the second edition of his sister's novel of *David Simple*, which appeared in 1744. This, while rendering fraternal justice to that now forgotten book, is memorable for some personal utterances on Fielding's part. In denying the authorship of *David Simple*, which had been attributed to him, he takes occasion to appeal against the injustice of referring anonymous works to his pen, in the face of his distinct engagement in the Preface to the *Miscellanies*, that he would thenceforth write nothing except over his own signature; and he complains that such a course has a tendency to injure him in a profession to which "he has applied with so arduous and intent a diligence, that he has had no leisure, if he had inclination, to compose anything of this kind" (*i. e.*, *David Simple*). At the same time, he formally withdraws his promise, since it has in no wise exempted him from the scandal of putting forth anonymous work. From other passages in this "Preface," it may be gathered the immediate cause of irritation was the assignment to his pen of "that infamous paultry libel" the *Causidicade*, a satire directed at the law in general, and some of the subscribers to the *Miscellanies* in particular. "This," he says, "accused me not only of being a bad writer, and a bad man, but with downright idiotism, in flying in the face of the greatest men of my profession." It may easily

be conceived that such a report must be unfavourable to a struggling barrister, and Fielding's anxiety on this head is a strong proof that he was still hoping to succeed at the Bar. To a subsequent collection of *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple and some others*, he supplied another preface three years later; but beyond a complimentary reference to Lyttelton's *Persian Letters*, it has no biographical interest.

A life of ups and downs like Fielding's is seldom remarkable for its consistency. It is therefore not surprising to find that, despite his desire in 1744 to refrain from writing, he was again writing in 1745. The landing of Charles Edward attracted him once more into the ranks of journalism, on the side of the Government, and gave rise to the *True Patriot*, a weekly paper, the first number of which appeared in November. This, having come to an end with the Rebellion, was succeeded in December, 1747, by the *Jacobite's Journal*, supposed to emanate from "John Trott-Plaid, Esq.," and intended to push the discomfiture of Jacobite sentiment still further. It is needless to discuss these mainly political efforts at any length. They are said to have been highly approved by those in power: it is certain that they earned for their author the stigma of "pension'd scribbler." Both are now very rare; and in Murphy the former is represented by twenty-four numbers, the latter by two only. The *True Patriot* contains a dream of London abandoned to the rebels, which is admirably graphic; and there is also a prophetic chronicle of events for 1746 in which the same idea is treated in a lighter and more satirical vein. But perhaps the most interesting feature is the reappearance of Parson Adams, who addresses a couple of letters to the same periodical—one on the rising generally, and the other on the "Young

England" of the day, as exemplified in a very offensive specimen he had recently encountered at Mr. Wilson's. Other minor points of interest in connection with the *Jacobite's Journal*, are the tradition associating Hogarth with the rude woodcut headpiece (a Scotch man and woman on an ass led by a monk) which surmounted its earlier numbers, and the genial welcome given in No. 5, perhaps not without some touch of contrition, to the two first volumes, then just published, of Richardson's *Clarissa*. The pen is the pen of an imaginary "correspondent," but the words are unmistakably Fielding's:

"When I tell you I have lately received this Pleasure [*i. e.*, of reading a new master-piece], you will not want me to inform you that I owe it to the Author of CLARISSA. Such Simplicity, such Manners, such deep Penetration into Nature; such Power to raise and alarm the Passions, few Writers, either ancient or modern, have been possessed of. My Affections are so strongly engaged, and my Fears are so raised, by what I have already read, that I cannot express my Eagerness to see the rest. Sure this Mr. *Richardson* is Master of all that Art which *Horace* compares to Witchcraft

—Pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet
Ut Magus.—"

Between the discontinuance of the *True Patriot* and the establishment of its successor occurred an event, the precise date of which has been hitherto unknown, namely, Fielding's second marriage. The account given of this by Lady Louisa Stuart is as follows:

"His [Fielding's] biographers seem to have been shy of disclosing that after the death of this charming woman [his first wife] he married her maid. And yet the act was not so discreditable to his character as it may sound. The maid had few personal charms, but was an excellent creature, devotedly attached to her mistress,

and almost broken-hearted for her loss. In the first agonies of his own grief, which approached to frenzy, he found no relief but from weeping along with her; nor solace, when a degree calmer, but in talking to her of the angel they mutually regretted. This made her his habitual confidential associate, and in process of time he began to think he could not give his children a tenderer mother, or secure for himself a more faithful housekeeper and nurse. At least, this was what he told his friends; and it is certain that her conduct as his wife confirmed it, and fully justified his good opinion."

It has now been ascertained that the marriage took place at St. Benet's, Paul's Wharf, an obscure little church in the City, at present surrendered to a Welsh congregation, but at that time, like Mary-le-bone old church, much in request for unions of a private character. The date in the register is the 27th of November, 1747. The second Mrs. Fielding's maiden name, which has been hitherto variously reported as Macdonnell, Macdonald, and Macdaniel, is given as Mary Daniel,[1] and she is further described as "of St. Clement's Danes, Middlesex, Spinster." Either previously to this occurrence, or immediately after it, Fielding seems to have taken two rooms in a house in Back Lane, Twickenham, "not far," says the Rev. Mr. Cobbett in his *Memorials*, "from the site of Copt Hall." In 1872 this house was still standing—a quaint old-fashioned wooden structure[2]—and from hence, on the 25th of February, 1748, was baptized the first of the novelist's sons concerning whom any definite information exists—the William Fielding who, like his father, became a Westminster magistrate. Beyond suggesting that it may supply a reason why, during Mrs. Fielding's life-time, her husband's earliest biographer made no reference to the marriage, it is needless to dwell upon

[1] See note to Fielding's letter in Chap. VII.

[2] Now (1883) it no longer exists, and a row of cottages occupies the site.

the proximity between the foregoing dates. In other respects the circumstance now first made public is not inconsistent with Lady Stuart's narrative; and there is no doubt, from the references to her in the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* and elsewhere, that Mary Daniel did prove an excellent wife, mother, and nurse. Another thing is made clear by the date established, and this is that the verses "On Felix; Marry'd to a Cook-Maid," in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1746, to which Mr. Lawrence refers, cannot possibly have anything to do with Fielding, although they seem to indicate that alliances of the kind were not unusual. Perhaps *Pamela* had made them fashionable. On the other hand, the supposed allusion to Lyttelton and Fielding, to be found in the first edition of *Peregrine Pickle*, but afterwards suppressed, receives a certain confirmation. "When," says Smollett, speaking of the relations of an imaginary Mr. Spondy with Gosling Scrag, who is understood to represent Lyttelton, "he is inclined to marry his own cook-wench, his gracious patron may condescend to give the bride away; and may finally settle him in his old age, as a trading Westminster justice." That, looking to the facts, Fielding's second marriage should have gained the approval and countenance of Lyttelton is no more than the upright and honourable character of the latter would lead us to expect.

The *Jacobite's Journal* ceased to appear in November, 1748. In the early part of the December following, the remainder of Smollett's programme came to pass, and by Lyttelton's interest Fielding was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Westminster. From a letter in the *Bedford Correspondence*, dated 13th of December, 1748, respecting the lease of a house or houses which would qualify him to act for Middlesex, it would seem that the county was af-

terwards added to his commission. He must have entered upon his office in the first weeks of December, as upon the 9th of that month one John Salter was committed to the Gatehouse by Henry Fielding, Esq., "of Bow Street, Covent Garden, formerly Sir Thomas de Veil's." Sir Thomas de Veil, who died in 1746, and whose *Memoirs* had just been published, could not, however, have been Fielding's immediate predecessor.

CHAPTER V.

"TOM JONES."

WRITING from Basingstoke to his brother Tom, on the 29th of October, 1746, Joseph Warton thus refers to a visit he paid to Fielding:

"I wish you had been with me last week, when I spent two evenings with Fielding and his sister, who wrote David Simple, and you may guess I was very well entertained. The lady, indeed, retir'd pretty soon, but Russell and I sat up with the Poet [Warton no doubt uses the word here in the sense of "maker" or "creator"] till one or two in the morning, and were inexpressibly diverted. I find he values, as he justly may, his Joseph Andrews above all his writings: he was extremely civil to me, I fancy, on my Father's account."[1]

This mention of *Joseph Andrews* has misled some of Fielding's biographers into thinking that he ranked that novel above *Tom Jones*. But, in October, 1746, *Tom Jones* had not been published; and, from the absence of any reference to it by Warton, it is only reasonable to conclude that it had not yet assumed a definite form, or Fielding, who was by no means uncommunicative, would in all probability have spoken of it as an effort from which he expected still greater things. It is clear, too, that at

[1] *I. e.*, the Rev. Thomas Warton, Vicar of Basingstoke, and sometime Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

this date he was staying in London, presumably in lodgings with his sister; and it is also most likely that he lived much in town when he was conducting the *True Patriot* and the *Jacobite's Journal.* At other times he would appear to have had no settled place of abode. There are traditions that *Tom Jones* was composed in part at Salisbury, in a house at the foot of Milford Hill; and again that it was written at Twiverton, or Twerton-on-Avon, near Bath, where, as the Vicar pointed out in *Notes and Queries* for March 15th, 1879, there still exists a house called Fielding's Lodge, over the door of which is a stone crest of a phœnix rising out of a mural coronet. This latter tradition is supported by the statement of Mr. Richard Graves, author of the *Spiritual Quixote*, and rector, *circa* 1750, of the neighbouring parish of Claverton, who says in his *Trifling Anecdotes of the late Ralph Allen*, that Fielding while at Twerton used to dine almost daily with Allen at Prior Park. There are also traces of his residence at Bath itself; and of visits to the seat of Lyttelton's father at Hagley, in Worcestershire. Towards the close of 1747 he had, as before stated, rooms in Back Lane, Twickenham; and it must be to this or to some earlier period that Walpole alludes in his *Parish Register* (1759):

> "Here Fielding met his bunter Muse
> And, as they quaff'd the fiery juice,
> Droll Nature stamp'd each lucky hit
> With unimaginable wit;"—

a quatrain in which the last lines excuse the first. According to Mr. Cobbett's already-quoted *Memorials of Twickenham*, he left that place upon his appointment as a Middlesex magistrate, when he moved to Bow Street. His house in Bow Street belonged to John, Duke of Bedford; and

he continued to live in it until a short time before his death. It was subsequently occupied by his half brother and successor, Sir John,[1] who, writing to the Duke in March, 1770, to thank him for his munificent gift of an additional ten years to the lease, recalls "that princely instance of generosity which his Grace shewed to his late brother, Henry Fielding."

What this was is not specified. It may have been the gift of the leases of those tenements which, as explained, were necessary to qualify Fielding to act as a Justice of the Peace for the county of Middlesex; it may even have been the lease of the Bow Street house; or it may have been simply a gift of money. But whatever it was, it was something considerable. In his appeal to the Duke, at the close of the last chapter, Fielding referred to previous obligations, and in his dedication of *Tom Jones* to Lyttelton, he returns again to his Grace's beneficence. Another person, of whose kindness grateful but indirect mention is made in the same dedication, is Ralph Allen, who, according to Derrick, the Bath M.C., sent the novelist a present of £200, before he had even made his acquaintance,[2] which, from the reference to Allen in *Joseph Andrews*, probably began before 1743. Lastly, there is Lyttelton himself, concerning whom, in addition to a sentence which implies that he actually suggested the writing of *Tom Jones*, we have the express statements on Fielding's part that "without your Assistance this History had never been completed," and "I partly owe to you my Existence during great Part of the Time which I have

[1] In the riots of '80—as Dickens has not forgotten to note in *Barnaby Rudge*—the house was destroyed by the mob, who burned Sir John's goods in the street (Boswell's *Johnson*, chap. lxx.).

[2] Derrick's *Letter*, 1767, ii. 95.

employed in composing it." These words must plainly be accepted as indicating pecuniary help; and, taking all things together, there can be little doubt that for some years antecedent to his appointment as a Justice of the Peace, Fielding was in straitened circumstances, and was largely aided, if not practically supported, by his friends. Even supposing him to have been subsidised by Government as alleged, his profits from the *True Patriot* and the *Jacobite's Journal* could not have been excessive; and his gout, of which he speaks in one of his letters to the Duke of Bedford, must have been a serious obstacle in the way of his legal labours.

The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling, was published by Andrew Millar on the 28th of February, 1749, and its appearance in six volumes, 12mo, was announced in the *General Advertizer* of that day's date. There had been no author's name on the title-page of *Joseph Andrews;* but *Tom Jones* was duly described as "by Henry Fielding, Esq.," and bore the motto from Horace, seldom so justly applied, of "*Mores hominum multorum vidit.*" The advertisement also ingenuously stated that as it was "impossible to get Sets bound fast enough to answer the Demand for them, such Gentlemen and Ladies as pleased, might have them sew'd in Blue Paper and Boards at the Price of 16*s.* a Set." The date of issue sufficiently disposes of the statement of Cunningham and others, that the book was written at Bow Street. Little more than the dedication, which is preface as well, can have been produced by Fielding in his new home. Making fair allowance for the usual tardy progress of a book through the press, and taking into consideration the fact that the author was actively occupied with his yet unfamiliar magisterial duties, it is most probable that the last chapter of

Tom Jones had been penned before the end of 1748, and that after that time it had been at the printer's. For the exact price paid to the author by the publisher on this occasion we are indebted to Horace Walpole, who, writing to George Montagu in May, 1749, says: "Millar the bookseller has done very generously by him [Fielding]: finding Tom Jones, for which he had given him six hundred pounds, sell so greatly, he has since given him another hundred."

It is time, however, to turn from these particulars to the book itself. In *Joseph Andrews* Fielding's work had been mainly experimental. He had set out with an intention which had unexpectedly developed into something else. That something else, he had explained, was the comic epic in prose. He had discovered its scope and possibilities only when it was too late to re-cast his original design; and though *Joseph Andrews* has all the freshness and energy of a first attempt in a new direction, it has also the manifest disadvantages of a mixed conception and an uncertain plan. No one had perceived these defects more plainly than the author; and in *Tom Jones* he set himself diligently to perfect his new-found method. He believed that he foresaw a "new Province of Writing," of which he regarded himself with justice as the founder and lawgiver; and in the "prolegomenous, or introductory Chapters," to each book—those delightful resting-spaces where, as George Eliot says, "he seems to bring his arm-chair to the proscenium and chat with us in all the lusty ease of his fine English"—he takes us, as it were, into his confidence, and discourses frankly of his aims and his way of work. He looked upon these little "initial Essays," indeed, as an indispensable part of his scheme. They have given him, says he more than once, "the greatest Pains in composing" of any part of his book, and he hopes that, like

the Greek and Latin mottoes in the *Spectator*, they may serve to secure him against imitation by inferior writers.[1] Naturally a great deal they contain is by this time commonplace, although it was unhackneyed enough when Fielding wrote. The absolute necessity in writing of this kind for genius, learning, and knowledge of the world, the constant obligation to preserve character and probability—to regard variety and the law of contrast—these are things with which the modern tyro (however much he may fail to possess or observe them) is now supposed to be at least theoretically acquainted. But there are other chapters in which Fielding may also be said to reveal his personal point of view, and these can scarcely be disregarded. His "Fare," he says, following the language of the table, is "HUMAN NATURE," which he shall first present "in that more plain and simple Manner in which it is found in the Country," and afterwards "hash and ragoo it with all the high *French* and *Italian* seasoning of Affectation and Vice which Courts and Cities afford." His inclination, he admits, is rather to the middle and lower classes than to "the highest Life," which he considers to present "very little Humour or Entertainment." His characters (as before) are based upon actual experience; or, as he terms it, "Conversation." He does not propose to present his reader with "Models of Perfection;" he has never happened to meet with those "faultless Monsters." He holds that mankind is constitutionally defective, and that a single bad act does not, of necessity, imply a bad nature. He has also observed, without surprise, that virtue in this

[1] Notwithstanding this warning, Cumberland (who copied so much) copied these in his novel of *Henry*. On the other hand, Fielding's French and Polish translators omitted them as superfluous.

world is not always "the certain Road to Happiness," nor "Vice to Misery." In short, having been admitted "behind the scenes of this Great Theatre of Nature," he paints humanity as he has found it, extenuating nothing, nor setting down aught in malice, but reserving the full force of his satire and irony for affectation and hypocrisy. His sincere endeavour, he says moreover in his dedication to Lyttelton, has been "to recommend Goodness and Innocence," and promote the cause of religion and virtue. And he has all the consciousness that what he is engaged upon is no ordinary enterprise. He is certain that his pages will outlive both "their own infirm Author" and his enemies; and he appeals to Fame to solace and reassure him:

"Come, bright Love of Fame"—says the beautiful "Invocation" which begins the thirteenth Book—"inspire my glowing Breast: Not thee I call, who over swelling Tides of Blood and Tears, dost bear the Heroe on to Glory, while Sighs of Millions waft his spreading Sails; but thee, fair, gentle Maid, whom *Mnesis*, happy Nymph, first on the Banks of *Hebrus* didst produce. Thee, whom *Maeonia* educated, whom *Mantua* charm'd, and who, on that fair Hill which overlooks the proud Metropolis of *Britain*, sat, with thy *Milton*, sweetly tuning the Heroic Lyre; fill my ravished Fancy with the Hopes of charming Ages yet to come. Foretel me that some tender Maid, whose Grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious Name of *Sophia*, she reads the real Worth which once existed in my *Charlotte*, shall, from her sympathetic Breast, send forth the heaving Sigh. Do thou teach me not only to foresee, but to enjoy, nay, even to feed on future Praise. Comfort me by a solemn Assurance, that when the little Parlour in which I sit at this Instant, shall be reduced to a worse furnished Box, I shall be read, with Honour, by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see."

With no less earnestness, after a mock apostrophe to Wealth, he appeals to Genius:

"Teach me [he exclaims], which to thee is no difficult Task, to know Mankind better than they know themselves. Remove that Mist which dims the Intellects of Mortals, and causes them to adore Men for their Art, or to detest them for their Cunning in deceiving others, when they are, in Reality, the Objects only of Ridicule, for deceiving themselves. Strip off the thin Disguise of Wisdom from Self-Conceit, of Pleasure from Avarice, and of Glory from Ambition. Come thou, that hast inspired thy *Aristophanes*, thy *Lucian*, thy *Cervantes*, thy *Rabelais*, thy *Molière*, thy *Shakespear*, thy *Swift*, thy *Marivaux*, fill my Pages with Humour, 'till Mankind learn the Good-Nature to laugh only at the Follies of others, and the Humility to grieve at their own."

From the little group of immortals who are here enumerated, it may be gathered with whom Fielding sought to compete, and with whom he hoped hereafter to be associated. His hopes were not in vain. Indeed, in one respect, he must be held to have even outrivalled that particular predecessor with whom he has been oftenest compared. Like *Don Quixote*, *Tom Jones* is the precursor of a new order of things—the earliest and freshest expression of a new departure in art. But while *Tom Jones* is, to the full, as amusing as *Don Quixote*, it has the advantage of a greatly superior plan, and an interest more skilfully sustained. The incidents which, in Cervantes, simply succeed each other like the scenes in a panorama, are, in *Tom Jones*, but parts of an organised and carefully-arranged progression towards a foreseen conclusion. As the hero and heroine cross and recross each other's track, there is scarcely an episode which does not aid in the moving forward of the story. Little details rise lightly and naturally to the surface of the narrative, not more noticeable at first than the most everyday occurrences, and a few pages farther on become of the greatest importance. The hero makes a mock proposal of marriage

to Lady Bellaston. It scarcely detains attention, so natural an expedient does it appear, and behold in a chapter or two it has become a terrible weapon in the hands of the injured Sophia! Again, when the secret of Jones' birth[1] is finally disclosed, we look back and discover a hundred little premonitions which escaped us at first, but which, read by the light of our latest knowledge, assume a fresh significance. At the same time, it must be admitted that the over-quoted and somewhat antiquated dictum of Coleridge, by which *Tom Jones* is grouped with the *Alchemist* and *Œdipus Tyrannus*, as one of the three most perfect plots in the world, requires revision. It is impossible to apply the term "perfect" to a work which contains such an inexplicable stumbling-block as the Man of the Hill's story. Then, again, progress and animation alone will not make a perfect plot, unless probability be superadded. And although it cannot be said that Fielding disregards probability, he certainly strains it considerably. Money is conveniently lost and found; the naïvest coincidences continually occur; people turn up in the nick of time at the exact spot required, and develop the most needful (but entirely casual) relations with the characters. Sometimes an episode is so inartistically introduced as to be almost clumsy. Towards the end of the book, for instance, it has to be shown that Jones has still some power of resisting temptation, and he accordingly receives from a Mrs. Arabella Hunt a written offer of her hand, which he declines. Mrs. Hunt's name has never been mentioned

[1] Much ink has been shed respecting Fielding's reason for making his hero illegitimate. But may not "The History of Tom Jones, a *Foundling*," have had no subtler origin than the recent establishment of the Foundling Hospital, of which Fielding had written in the *Champion*, and in which his friend Hogarth was interested?

before, nor, after this occurrence, is it mentioned again. But in the brief fortnight which Jones has been in town, with his head full of Lady Bellaston, Sophia, and the rest, we are to assume that he has unwittingly inspired her with so desperate a passion that she proposes and is refused—all in a chapter. Imperfections of this kind are more worthy of consideration than some of the minor negligences which criticism has amused itself by detecting in this famous book. Such, among others, is the discovery made by a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, that in one place winter and summer come too close together; or the "strange specimen of oscitancy" which another (it is, in fact, Mr. Keightley) considers it worth while to record respecting the misplacing of the village of Hambrook. To such trifles as these last the precept of *non offendar maculis* may safely be applied, although Fielding, wiser than his critics, seems to have foreseen the necessity for still larger allowances:

"Cruel indeed"—says he in his proemium to Book XI.—"would it be, if such a Work as this History, which hath employed some Thousands of Hours in the composing, should be liable to be condemned, because some particular Chapter, or perhaps Chapters, may be obnoxious to very just and sensible Objections. . . . To write within such severe Rules as these, is as impossible as to live up to some splenetic Opinions; and if we judge according to the Sentiments of some Critics, and of some Christians, no Author will be saved in this World, and no Man in the next."

Notwithstanding its admitted superiority to *Joseph Andrews* as a work of art, there is no male character in *Tom Jones* which can compete with Parson Adams—none certainly which we regard with equal admiration. All-worthy, excellent compound of Lyttelton and Allen though he be, remains always a little stiff and cold in comparison

with the "veined humanity" around him. We feel of him, as of another impeccable personage, that we "cannot breathe in that fine air, that pure severity of perfect light," and that we want the "warmth and colour" which we find in Adams. Allworthy is a type rather than a character—a fault which also seems to apply to that Molièresque hypocrite, the younger Blifil. Fielding seems to have welded this latter together, rather than to have fused him entire, and the result is a certain lack of verisimilitude, which makes us wonder how his pinchbeck professions and vamped-up virtues could deceive so many persons. On the other hand, his father, Captain John Blifil, has all the look of life. Nor can there be any doubt about the vitality of Squire Western. Whether the germ of his character be derived from Addison's Tory Foxhunter or not, it is certain that Fielding must have had superabundant material of his own from which to model this thoroughly representative and, at the same time, completely individual character. Western has all the rustic tastes, the narrow prejudices, the imperfect education, the unreasoning hatred to the court, which distinguished the Jacobite country gentleman of the Georgian era; but his divided love for his daughter and his horses, his good-humour and his shrewdness, his foaming impulses and his quick subsidings, his tears, his oaths, and his barbaric dialect, are all essential features in a personal portrait. When Jones has rescued Sophia, he will give him all his stable, the Chevalier and Miss Slouch excepted; when he finds he is in love with her, he is in a frenzy to "get *at un*" and "spoil his Caterwauling." He will have the surgeon's heart's blood if he takes a drop too much from Sophia's white arm; when she opposes his wishes as to Blifil, he will turn her into the street with no more than a smock,

and give his estate to the "*zinking* Fund." Throughout the book he is *qualis ab incepto*—boisterous, brutal, jovial, and inimitable; so that when finally, in "Chapter the Last," we get that pretty picture of him in Sophy's nursery, protesting that the tattling of his little granddaughter is "sweeter Music than the finest Cry of Dogs in *England*," we part with him almost with a feeling of esteem. Scott seems to have thought it unreasonable that he should have "taken a beating so unresistingly from the friend of Lord Fellamar," and even hints that the passage is an interpolation, although he wisely refrains from suggesting by whom, and should have known that it was in the first edition. With all deference to so eminent an authority, it is impossible to share his hesitation. Fielding was fully aware that even the bravest have their fits of panic. It must besides be remembered that Lord Fellamar's friend was not an effeminate dandy, but a military man—probably a professed *sabreur*, if not a salaried bully like Captain Stab, in the *Rake's Progress;* that he was armed with a stick, and Western was not; and that he fell upon him in the most unexpected manner, in a place where he was wholly out of his element. It is inconceivable that the sturdy squire, with his faculty for distributing "Flicks" and "Dowses"—who came so valiantly to the aid of Jones in his battle-royal with Blifil and Thwackum—was likely, under any but very exceptional circumstances, to be dismayed by a cane. It was the exceptional character of the assault which made a coward of him; and Fielding, who had the keenest eye for inconsistencies of the kind, knew perfectly well what he was doing.

Of the remaining *dramatis personæ*—the swarming individualities with which the great comic epic is literally "all alive," as Lord Monboddo said—it is impossible to

give any adequate account. Few of them, if any, are open to the objection already pointed out with respect to Allworthy and the younger Blifil, and most of them bear signs of having been closely copied from living models. Parson Thwackum, with his Antinomian doctrines, his bigotry, and his pedagogic notions of justice; Square, the philosopher, with his faith in human virtue (alas! poor Square), and his cuckoo-cry about "the unalterable Rule of Right and the eternal Fitness of Things;" Partridge—the unapproachable Partridge—with his superstition, his vanity, and his perpetual *Infandum regina*, but who, notwithstanding all his cheap Latinity, cannot construe an unexpected phrase of Horace; Ensign Northerton, with his vague and disrespectful recollections of "Homo;" young Nightingale and Parson Supple—each is a definite character bearing upon his forehead the mark of his absolute fidelity to human nature. Nor are the female actors less accurately conceived. Starched Miss Bridget Allworthy, with her pinched Hogarthian face; Miss Western, with her disjointed diplomatic jargon; that budding Slipslop, Mrs. Honour; worthy Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Mrs. Waters, Lady Bellaston—all are to the full as real. Lady Bellaston especially, deserves more than a word. Like Lady Booby, in *Joseph Andrews*, she is not a pleasant character; but the picture of the fashionable demirep, cynical, sensual, and imperious, has never been drawn more vigorously or more completely—even by Balzac. Lastly, there is the adorable Sophia herself, whose pardon should be asked for naming her in such close proximity to her frailer sister. Byron calls her (perhaps with a slight suspicion of exigence of rhyme) too "emphatic;" meaning, apparently, to refer to such passages as her conversation with Mrs. Fitzpatrick, etc. But the heroine of Fielding's time—a

time which made merry over a lady's misadventures in horsemanship, and subjected her to such atrocities as those of Lord Fellamar—required to be strongly moulded; and Sophia Western is pure and womanly, in spite of her unfavourable surroundings. She is a charming example—the first of her race—of an unsentimentalised flesh-and-blood heroine; and Time has bated no jot of her frank vitality or her healthy beauty. Her descendants in the modern novel are far more numerous than the family which she bore to the fortunate—the too fortunate—Mr. Jones.

And this reminds us that in the foregoing enumeration we have left out Hamlet. In truth, it is by no means easy to speak of this handsome but very unheroic hero. Lady Mary, employing, curiously enough, the very phrase which Fielding has made one of his characters apply to Jones, goes so far as to call him a "sorry scoundrel;" and eminent critics have dilated upon his fondness for drink and play. But it is a notable instance of the way in which preconceived attributes are gradually attached to certain characters, that there is in reality little or nothing to show that he was either sot or gamester. With one exception, when, in the joy of his heart at his benefactor's recovery, he takes too much wine (and it may be noted that on the same occasion the Catonic Thwackum drinks considerably more), there is no evidence that he was specially given to tippling, even in an age of hard drinkers, while of his gambling there is absolutely no trace at all. On the other hand, he is admittedly brave, generous, chivalrous, kind to the poor, and courteous to women. What, then, is his cardinal defect? The answer lies in the fact that Fielding, following the doctrine laid down in his initial chapters, has depicted him under certain conditions (in which, it is material to note, he is always rather the tempted than

the tempter), with an unvarnished truthfulness which to the pure-minded is repugnant, and to the prurient indecent. Remembering that he too had been young, and reproducing, it may be, his own experiences, he exhibits his youth as he had found him—a "piebald miscellany"—

"Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire;"

and, to our modern ideas, when no one dares, as Thackeray complained, "to depict to his utmost power a Man," the spectacle is discomforting. Yet those who look upon human nature as keenly and unflinchingly as Fielding did, knowing how weak and fallible it is—how prone to fall away by accident or passion—can scarcely deny the truth of Tom Jones. That such a person cannot properly serve as a hero now is rather a question of our time than of Fielding's, and it may safely be set aside. One objection which has been made, and made with reason, is that Fielding, while taking care that Nemesis shall follow his hero's lapses, has spoken of them with too much indulgence, or rather without sufficient excuse. Coleridge, who was certainly not squeamish, seems to have felt this when, in a MS. note[1] in the well-known British Museum edition, he says:

"Even in this most questionable part of Tom Jones [*i. e.*, the Lady Bellaston episode, Chap. IX., Book XV.], I cannot but think, after frequent reflection on it, that an additional paragraph, more fully & forcibly unfolding Tom Jones's sense of self-degradation on the discovery of the true character of the relation in which he had stood

[1] These notes were communicated by Mr. James Gillman to *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, published by H. N. Coleridge in 1836. The book in which they were made (it is the four volume edition of 1773, and has Gillman's book-plate) is now in the British Museum. The above transcript is from the MS.

to Lady Bellaston—& his awakened feeling of the dignity and manliness of Chastity—would have removed in great measure any just objection, at all events relating to Fielding himself, by taking in the state of manners in his time."

Another point suggested by these last lines may be touched *en passant.* Lady Bellaston, as Fielding has carefully explained (Chap. I., Book XIV.), was not a typical, but an exceptional, member of society; and although there were eighteenth-century precedents for such alliances (*e. g.*, Miss Edwards and Lord Anne Hamilton, Mrs. Upton and General Braddock), it is a question whether in a picture of average English life it was necessary to deal with exceptions of this kind, or, at all events, to exemplify them in the principal personage. But the discussion of this subject would prove endless. Right or wrong, Fielding has certainly suffered in popularity for his candour in this respect, since one of the wisest and wittiest books ever written cannot, without hesitation, be now placed in the hands of women or very young people. Moreover, this same candour has undoubtedly attracted to its pages many, neither young nor women, whom its wit finds unintelligent, and its wisdom leaves unconcerned.

But what a brave wit it is, what a wisdom after all, that is contained in this wonderful novel! Where shall we find its like for richness of reflection—for inexhaustible good-humour—for large and liberal humanity? Like Fontenelle, Fielding might fairly claim that he had never cast the smallest ridicule upon the most infinitesimal of virtues; it is against hypocrisy, affectation, insincerity of all kinds, that he wages war. And what a keen and searching observation—what a perpetual faculty of surprise—what an endless variety of method! Take the chapter headed ironically *A Receipt to regain the lost Affec-*

tions of a Wife, in which Captain John Blifil gives so striking an example of Mr. Samuel Johnson's just published *Vanity of Human Wishes*, by dying suddenly of apoplexy while he is considering what he will do with Mr. Allworthy's property (when it reverts to him); or that admirable scene, commended by Macaulay, of Partridge at the Playhouse, which is none the worse because it has just a slight look of kinship with that other famous visit which Sir Roger de Coverley paid to Philips's *Distrest Mother*. Or take again, as utterly unlike either of these, that burlesque Homeric battle in the churchyard, where the "sweetly-winding Stour" stands for "reedy Simois," and the bumpkins round for Greeks and Trojans! Or take yet once more, though it is woful work to offer bricks from this edifice which *has* already (in a sense) outlived the Escorial,[1] the still more diverse passage which depicts the changing conflict in Black George's mind as to whether he shall return to Jones the sixteen pounds that he has found:

"*Black George* having received the Purse, set forward towards the Alehouse; but in the Way a Thought occurred whether he should not detain this Money likewise. His Conscience, however, immediately started at this Suggestion, and began to upbraid him with Ingratitude to his Benefactor. To this his Avarice answered, 'That his conscience should have considered that Matter before, when he deprived poor *Jones* of his 500*l*. That having quietly acquiesced in what was of so much greater Importance, it was absurd, if not downright Hypocrisy, to affect any Qualms at this Trifle.'—In return to which, Conscience, like a good Lawyer, attempted to distinguish between an absolute Breach of Trust, as here where the Goods were delivered, and a bare Concealment of what was found, as in the former Case. Avarice presently treated this with Ridicule, called it a Distinction without a Difference, and absolutely insisted, that when once all Pretensions of Honour and Virtue were given up in

[1] The Escorial, it will be remembered, was partially burned in 1872.

any one Instance, that there was no Precedent for resorting to them upon a second Occasion. In short, poor Conscience had certainly been defeated in the Argument, had not Fear stept in to her Assistance, and very strenuously urged, that the real Distinction between the two Actions did not lie in the different degrees of Honour, but of Safety: For that the secreting the 500*l.* was a Matter of very little Hazard; whereas the detaining the sixteen Guineas was liable to the utmost Danger of Discovery.

"By this friendly Aid of Fear, Conscience obtained a complete Victory in the Mind of *Black George*, and after making him a few Compliments on his Honesty, forced him to deliver the Money to *Jones*."

When one remembers that this is but one of many such passages, and that the book, notwithstanding the indulgence claimed by the author in the Preface, and despite a certain hurry at the close, is singularly even in its workmanship, it certainly increases our respect for the manly genius of the writer, who, amid all the distractions of ill-health and poverty, could find the courage to pursue and perfect such a conception. It is true that both Cervantes and Bunyan wrote their immortal works in the confinement of a prison. But they must at least have enjoyed the seclusion so needful to literary labour; while *Tom Jones* was written here and there, at all times and in all places, with the dun at the door and the wolf not very far from the gate.[1]

The little sentence quoted some pages back from Walpole's letters is sufficient proof, if proof were needed, of its immediate success. Andrew Millar was shrewd enough, despite his constitutional confusion, and he is not likely to

[1] Salisbury, in the neighbourhood of which *Tom Jones* is laid, claims the originals of some of the characters. Thwackum is said to have been Hele, a schoolmaster; Square, one Chubb, a deist; and Dowling, the lawyer, a person named Stillingfleet.

have given an additional £100 to the author of any book without good reason. But the indications of that success are not very plainly impressed upon the public prints. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1749, which, as might be expected from Johnson's connection with it, contains ample accounts of his own tragedy of *Irene* and Richardson's recently-published *Clarissa*, has no notice of *Tom Jones*, nor is there even any advertisement of the second edition issued in the same year. But, in the emblematic frontispiece, it appears under *Clarissa* (and sharing with that work a possibly unintended proximity to a sprig of laurel stuck in a bottle of Nantes), amongst a pile of the books of the year; and in the "poetical essays" for August one Thomas Cawthorn breaks into rhymed panegyric. "Sick of her fools," sings this enthusiastic but scarcely lucid admirer—

> "Sick of her fools, great *Nature* broke the jest,
> And *Truth* held out each character to test,
> When *Genius* spoke: Let *Fielding* take the pen!
> Life dropt her mask, and all mankind were men."

There were others, however, who would scarcely have echoed the laudatory sentiments of Mr. Cawthorn. Amongst these was again the excellent Richardson, who seems to have been wholly unpropitiated by the olive branch held out to him in the *Jacobite's Journal*. His vexation at the indignity put upon *Pamela* by *Joseph Andrews* was now complicated by a twittering jealousy of the "spurious brat," as he obligingly called *Tom Jones*, whose success had been so "unaccountable." In these circumstances, some of the letters of his correspondents must have been gall and wormwood to him. Lady Bradshaigh, for instance, under her *nom de plume* of "Belfour," tells him that she is fatigued with the very name of the book,

having met several young ladies who were for ever talking of their Tom Jones's, "for so they call their favourites," and that the gentlemen, on their side, had their Sophias, one having gone so far as to give that all-popular name to his "Dutch mastiff puppy." But perhaps the best and freshest exhibition (for, as far as can be ascertained, it has never hitherto been made public) of Richardson's attitude to his rival is to be found in a little group of letters in the Forster collection at South Kensington. The writers are Aaron Hill and his daughters; but the letters do not seem to have been known to Mrs. Barbauld, whose last communication from Hill is dated November 2, 1748. Nor are they to be found in Hill's own correspondence. The ladies, it appears, had visited Richardson at Salisbury Court in 1741, and were great admirers of *Pamela* and the "divine *Clarissa*." Some months after *Tom Jones* was published, Richardson (not yet having brought himself to read the book) had asked them to do so, and give him their opinion as to its merits. Thereupon Minerva and Astræa, who, despite their names, and their description of themselves as "Girls of an untittering Disposition," must have been very bright and lively young persons, began seriously "to lay their two wise heads together" and "hazard this Discovery of their Emptiness." Having "with much ado got over some Reluctance, that was bred by a familiar coarseness in the *Title*," they report "much (masqu'd) merit" in the "whole six volumes"—"a double merit, both of Head, and *Heart*." Had it been the latter only it would be more worthy of Mr. Richardson's perusal; but, say these considerate pioneers, if he does spare it his attention, he must only do so at his leisure, for the author "introduces All his Sections (and too often interweaves the *serious* Body of his meanings), with long Runs of banter-

ing Levity, which his [Fielding's] Good sense may suffer by Effect of." "It is true (they continue), he seems to wear this Lightness, as a grave Head sometime wears a *Feather:* which tho' He and Fashion may consider as an ornament, Reflection will condemn, as a Disguise, and *covering.*" Then follows a brief excursus, intended for their correspondent's special consolation, upon the folly of treating grave things lightly; and with delightful sententiousness the letter thus concludes:

"Mean while, it is an honest pleasure, which we take in adding, that (exclusive of one wild, detach'd, and independent Story of a *Man of the Hill*, that neither brings on Anything, nor rose from Anything that went before it) All the changefull windings of the Author's Fancy carry on a course of regular Design; and end in an extremely moving Close, where Lives that seem'd to wander and run different ways, meet, All, in an instructive Center.

"The whole Piece consists of an inventive Race of Disapointments and Recoveries. It excites Curiosity, and holds it watchful. It has just and pointed Satire; but it is a partial Satire, and confin'd, too narrowly: It sacrifices to Authority, and Interest. Its *Events* reward Sincerity, and punish and expose Hypocrisy; shew Pity and Benevolence in amiable Lights, and Avarice and Brutality in very despicable ones. In every Part It has Humanity for its Intention: In too many, it *seems* wantoner than It was meant to be: It has bold shocking Pictures; and (I fear)[1] not unresembling ones, in high Life, and in low. And (to conclude this too adventurous Guess-work, from a Pair of forward Baggages) woud, every where, (we think,) *deserve* to please,—if stript of what the Author thought himself most sure to *please by.*

"And thus, Sir, we have told you our sincere opinion of *Tom Jones*. . . .

"Your most profest Admirers and most humble Servants,

"ASTRÆA and MINERVA } HILL.

"PLAISTOW *the 27th of July* 1749."

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[1] The "pen-holder" is the fair Astræa.

Richardson's reply to this ingenuous criticism is dated the 4th of August. His requesting two young women to study and criticise a book which he has heard strongly condemned as immoral—his own obvious familiarity with what he has not read but does not scruple to censure—his transparently jealous anticipation of its author's ability—all this forms a picture so characteristic alike of the man and the time, that no apology is needed for the following textual extract:

"I must confess, that I have been prejudiced by the Opinion of Several judicious Friends against the truly coarse-titled Tom Jones; and so have been discouraged from reading it.—I was told, that it was a rambling Collection of Waking Dreams, in which Probability was not observed: And that it had a very bad Tendency. And I had Reason to think that the Author intended for his Second View (His *first*, to fill his Pocket, by accommodating it to the reigning Taste) in writing it, to whiten a vicious Character, and to make Morality bend to his Practices. What Reason had he to make his Tom illegitimate, in an Age where Keeping is become a Fashion? Why did he make him a common—What shall I call it? And a Kept Fellow, the Lowest of all Fellows, yet in Love with a Young Creature who was traping [trapesing?] after him, a Fugitive from her Father's House?—Why did he draw his Heroine so fond, so foolish, and so insipid?—Indeed he has one excuse—He knows not how to draw a delicate Woman—He has not been accustomed to such Company,—And is too prescribing, too impetuous, too immoral, I will venture to say, to take any other Byass than that a perverse and crooked Nature has given him; or Evil Habits, at least, have confirm'd in him. Do Men expect Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles? But, perhaps, I think the worse of the Piece because I know the Writer, and dislike his Principles both Public and Private, tho' I wish well to the *Man*, and Love Four worthy Sisters of his,[1] with whom I am well acquainted. And indeed should admire him, did he make the Use of his Talents which I wish him to make, For

[1] From this it would seem that General Fielding had some daughters of whom no record has been preserved.

the Vein of Humour, and Ridicule, which he is Master of, might, if properly turned, do great Service to ye Cause of Virtue.

"But no more of this Gentleman's Work, after I have said, That the favourable Things, you say of the Piece, will tempt me, if I can find Leisure, to give it a Perusal."

Notwithstanding this last sentence, Richardson more than once reverts to *Tom Jones* before he finishes his letter. Its effect upon Minerva and Astræa is best described in an extract from Aaron Hill's reply, dated seven days later (August the 11th):

"Unfortunate *Tom Jones!* how sadly has he mortify'd Two sawcy Correspondents of your making! They are with me now: and bid me tell you, You have spoil'd 'em Both, for Criticks.—Shall I add, a Secret which they did not bid me tell you?—They, Both, fairly *cry'd*, that You shou'd think it possible they cou'd approve of Any thing, in Any work, that had an *Evil Tendency*, in any Part or Purpose of it. They maintain their Point so far, however, as to be convinc'd they say, that *you* will disapprove this over-rigid Judgment of those Friends, who cou'd not find a Thread of Moral Meaning in Tom Jones, quite independent of the Levities they justly censure.—And, as soon as you have Time to read him, for yourself, tis there, pert Sluts, they will be bold enough to rest the Matter.—Mean while, they love and honour you and your opinions."

To this the author of *Clarissa* replied by writing a long epistle deploring the pain he had given the "dear Ladies," and minutely justifying his foregone conclusions from the expressions they had used. He refers to Fielding again as "a very indelicate, a very impetuous, an unyielding-spirited Man;" and he also trusts to be able to "bestow a Reading" on *Tom Jones;* but by a letter from Lady Bradshaigh, printed in Barbauld, and dated December, 1749, it seems that even at that date he had not, or pretended he had not, yet done so. In another of the unpublished South Kensington letters, from a Mr. Solomon Lowe, oc-

curs the following: "I do not doubt"—says the writer —"but all Europe will ring of it [*Clarissa*]: when a Cracker, that was some thous^d hours a-composing,[1] will no longer be heard, or talkt-of." Richardson, with business-like precision, has gravely docketed this in his own handwriting—"Cracker, T. Jones."

It is unfortunate for Mr. Lowe's reputation as a prophet that, after more than one hundred and thirty years, this ephemeral firework, as he deemed it, should still be sparkling with undiminished brilliancy, and, to judge by recent editions, is selling as vigorously as ever. From the days when Lady Mary wrote "*Ne plus ultra*" in her own copy, and La Harpe called it *le premier roman du monde* (a phrase which, by the way, De Musset applies to *Clarissa*), it has come down to us with an almost universal accompaniment of praise. Gibbon, Byron, Coleridge, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, have all left their admiration on record—to say nothing of professional critics innumerable. As may be seen from the British Museum Catalogue, it has been translated into French, German, Polish, Dutch, and Spanish. Russia and Sweden have also their versions. The first French translation, or rather abridgment, by M. de La Place was prohibited in France (to Richardson's delight) by royal decree, an act which affords another instance, in Scott's words, of that "French delicacy, which, on so many occasions, has strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel" (*e. g.*, the novels of M. Crébillon *fils*). La Place's edition (1750) was gracefully illustrated with sixteen plates by Hubert Bourguignon, called Gravelot, one of those eighteenth-century illustrators whose designs at present are the rage in Paris. In England, Fielding's best-known pictorial interpreters are Rowlandson and Cruik-

[1] *Vide Tom Jones*, Book XI., Chap. I.

shank, the latter being by far the more sympathetic. Stothard also prepared some designs for Harrison's *Novelist's Magazine;* but his refined and effeminate pencil was scarcely strong enough for the task. Hogarth alone could have been the ideal illustrator of Henry Fielding; that is to say, if, in lieu of the rude designs he made for *Tristram Shandy*, he could have been induced to undertake the work in the larger fashion of the *Rake's Progress* or the *Marriage à la Mode.*

As might perhaps be anticipated, *Tom Jones* attracted the dramatist.[1] In 1765 one J. H. Steffens made a comedy of it for the German boards; and in 1785 a M. Desforges based upon it another, called *Tom Jones à Londres*, which was acted at the *Théâtre Français.* It was also turned into a comic opera by Joseph Reed in 1769, and played at Covent Garden. But its most piquant transformation is the *Comédie lyrique* of Poinsinet, acted at Paris in 1765–6 to the lively music of Philidor. The famous Caillot took the part of Squire Western, who, surrounded by *piqueurs*, and girt with the conventional *cor de chasse* of the Gallic sportsman, sings the following *ariette*, diversified with true Fontainebleau terms of venery:

"D'un Cerf, dix Cors, j'ai connaissance:
On l'attaque au fort, on le lance;
Tous sont prêts:
Piqueurs & Valets
Suivent les pas de l'ami Jone (*sic*),
J'entends crier: Volcelets, Volcelets.

[1] It may be added that it also attracted the plagiarist. As *Pamela* had its sequel in *Pamela's Conduct in High Life*, 1741, so *Tom Jones* was continued in *The History of Tom Jones the Foundling, in his Married State*, a second edition of which was issued in 1750. The Preface announces, needlessly enough, that "Henry Fielding, Esq., is not the Author of this Book." It deserves no serious consideration.

Aussitôt j'ordonne
Que la Meute donne.
Tayaut, Tayaut, Tayaut.
Mes chiens découplés l'environnent;
Les trompes sonnent:
'Courage, Amis: Tayaut, Tayaut.'
Quelques chiens, que l'ardeur dérange,
Quittent la voye & prennent le change.
Jones les rassure d'un cri:
Ourvari, ourvari.
Accoute, accoute, accoute.
Au retour nous en revoyons.
Accoute, à Mirmiraut, courons;
Tout à Griffaut;
Y après: Tayaut, Tayaut.
On reprend route,
Voilà le Cerf à l'eau.
La trompe sonne,
La Meute donne,
L'écho résonne,
Nous pressons les nouveaux relais:
Volcelets, Volcelets.
L'animal forcé succombe,
Fait un effort, se releve, enfin tombe:
Et nos chasseurs chantent tous à l'envi:
'Amis, goûtons les fruits de la victoire;
Amis, Amis, célébrons notre gloire.
Halali, Fanfare, Halali
Halali.'"

With this triumphant flourish of trumpets the present chapter may be fittingly concluded.

CHAPTER VI.

JUSTICE LIFE—"AMELIA."

In one of Horace Walpole's letters to George Montagu, already quoted, there is a description of Fielding's Bow Street establishment, which has attracted more attention than it deserves. The letter is dated May the 18th, 1749, and the passage (in Cunningham's edition) runs as follows:

"He [Rigby] and Peter Bathurst[1] t'other night carried a servant of the latter's, who had attempted to shoot him, before Fielding; who, to all his other vocations, has, by the grace of Mr. Lyttelton, added that of Middlesex justice. He sent them word he was at supper, that they must come next morning. They did not understand that freedom, and ran up, where they found him banqueting with a blind man, a whore, and three Irishmen, on some cold mutton and a bone of ham, both in one dish, and the dirtiest cloth. He never stirred nor asked them to sit. Rigby, who had seen him so often come to beg a guinea of Sir C. Williams, and Bathurst, at whose father's he had lived for victuals, understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs; on which he civilised."

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[1] Bathurst was M.P. for New Sarum, and brother of Pope's friend, Allen, Lord Bathurst. Rigby was the Richard Rigby whose despicable character is familiar in Eighteenth-Century Memoirs. "He died (says Cunningham) involved in debt, with his accounts as Paymaster of the Forces hopelessly unsettled."

Scott calls this "a humiliating anecdote;" and both Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Keightley have exhausted rhetoric in the effort to explain it away. As told, it is certainly uncomplimentary; but considerable deductions must be made, both for the attitude of the narrator and the occasion of the narrative. Walpole's championship of his friends was notorious; and his absolute injustice, when his partisan spirit was uppermost, is everywhere patent to the readers of his Letters. In the present case he was not of the encroaching party; and he speaks from hearsay solely. But his friends had, in his opinion, been outraged by a man who, according to his ideas of fitness, should have come to them cap in hand; and, as a natural consequence, the story, no doubt exaggerated when it reached him, loses nothing under his transforming and malicious pen. Stripped of its decorative flippancy, however, there remains but little that can really be regarded as "humiliating." Scott himself suggests, what is most unquestionably the case, that the blind man was the novelist's half-brother, afterwards Sir John Fielding; and it is extremely unlikely that the lady so discourteously characterised could have been any other than his wife, who, Lady Stuart tells us, "had few personal charms." There remain the "three Irishmen," who may, or may not, have been perfectly presentable members of society. At all events, their mere nationality, so rapidly decided upon, cannot be regarded as a stigma. That the company and entertainment were scarcely calculated to suit the superfine standard of Mr. Bathurst and Mr. Rigby may perhaps be conceded. Fielding was by no means a rich man, and in his chequered career had possibly grown indifferent to minor decencies. Moreover, we are told by Murphy that, as a Westminster justice, he "kept his table open to those who had been his friends when

young, and had impaired their own fortunes." Thus, it must always have been a more or less ragged regiment who met about that kindly Bow Street board; but that the fact reflects upon either the host or guests cannot be admitted for a moment. If the anecdote is discreditable to anyone, it is to that facile retailer of *ana* and incorrigible society-gossip, Mr. Horace Walpole.

But while these unflattering tales were told of his private life, Fielding was fast becoming eminent in his public capacity. On the 12th of May, 1749, he was unanimously chosen chairman of Quarter Sessions at Hicks's Hall (as the Clerkenwell Sessions House was then called); and on the 29th of June following he delivered a charge to the Westminster Grand Jury, which is usually printed with his works, and which is still regarded by lawyers as a model exposition. It is at first a little unexpected to read his impressive and earnest denunciations of masquerades and theatres (in which latter, by the way, one Samuel Foote had very recently been following the example of the author of *Pasquin*); but Fielding the magistrate and Fielding the playwright were two different persons; and a long interval of changeful experience lay between them. In another part of his charge, which deals with the offence of libelling, it is possible that his very vigorous appeal was not the less forcible by reason of the personal attacks to which he had referred in the Preface to *David Simple*, the *Jacobite's Journal*, and elsewhere. His only other literary efforts during this year appear to have been a little pamphlet entitled *A True State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez;* and a formal congratulatory letter to Lyttelton upon his second marriage, in which, while speaking gratefully of his own obligations to his friend, he endeavours to enlist his sympathies for Moore the fabulist, who was also "about

to marry." The pamphlet had reference to an occurrence which took place in July. Three sailors of the *Grafton* man-of-war had been robbed in a house of ill fame in the Strand. Failing to obtain redress, they attacked the house with their comrades, and wrecked it, causing a "dangerous riot," to which Fielding makes incidental reference in one of his letters to the Duke of Bedford, and which was witnessed by John Byrom, the poet and stenographer, in whose *Remains* it is described. Bosavern Penlez, or Pen Lez, who had joined the crowd, and in whose possession some of the stolen property was found, was tried and hanged in September. His sentence, which was considered extremely severe, excited much controversy, and the object of Fielding's pamphlet was to vindicate the justice and necessity of his conviction.

Towards the close of 1749 Fielding fell seriously ill with fever aggravated by gout. It was indeed at one time reported that mortification had supervened; but under the care of Dr. Thomson, that dubious practitioner whose treatment of Winnington in 1746 had given rise to so much paper war, he recovered; and during 1750 was actively employed in his magisterial duties. At this period lawlessness and violence appear to have prevailed to an unusual extent in the metropolis, and the office of a Bow Street justice was no sinecure. Reform of some kind was felt on all sides to be urgently required; and Fielding threw his two years' experience and his deductions therefrom into the form of a pamphlet entitled *An Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers, etc., with some Proposals for remedying this growing Evil.* It was dedicated to the then Lord High Chancellor, Philip Yorke, Lord Hardwicke, by whom, as well as by more recent legal authorities, it was highly appreciated. Like the *Charge to*

the Grand Jury, it is a grave argumentative document, dealing seriously with luxury, drunkenness, gaming, and other prevalent vices. Once only, in an ironical passage respecting beaus and fine ladies, does the author remind us of the author of *Tom Jones*. As a rule, he is weighty, practical, and learned in the law. Against the curse of gin-drinking, which, owing to the facilities for obtaining that liquor, had increased to an alarming extent among the poorer classes, he is especially urgent and energetic. He points out that it is not only making dreadful havoc in the present, but that it is enfeebling the race of the future, and he concludes:

"Some little Care on this Head is surely necessary: For tho' the Encrease of Thieves, and the Destruction of Morality; though the Loss of our Labourers, our Sailors, and our Soldiers, should not be sufficient Reasons, there is one which seems to be unanswerable, and that is, the Loss of our Gin-drinkers: Since, should the drinking this Poison be continued in its present Height during the next twenty Years, there will, by that Time, be very few of the common People left to drink it."

To the appeal thus made by Fielding in January, 1751, Hogarth added his pictorial protest in the following month by his awful plate of *Gin Lane*, which, if not actually prompted by his friend's words, was certainly inspired by the same crying evil. One good result of these efforts was the "Bill for restricting the Sale of Spirituous Liquors," to which the royal assent was given in June, and Fielding's connection with this enactment is practically acknowledged by Horace Walpole in his *Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II.* The law was not wholly effectual, and was difficult to enforce; but it was not by any means without its good effects.[1]

[1] The Rev. R. Hurd, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, an upright

Between the publication of the *Enquiry* and that of *Amelia* there is nothing of importance to chronicle except Fielding's connection with one of the events of 1751, the discovery of the Glastonbury waters. According to the account given in the *Gentleman's* for July in that year, a certain Matthew Chancellor had been cured of "an asthma and phthisic" of thirty years' standing by drinking from a spring near Chain Gate, Glastonbury, to which he had (so he alleged) been directed in a dream. The spring forthwith became famous; and in May an entry in the "Historical Chronicle" for Sunday, the 5th, records that above 10,000 persons had visited it, deserting Bristol, Bath, and other popular resorts. Numerous pamphlets were published for and against the new waters; and a letter in their favour, which appeared in the *London Daily Advertiser* for the 31st of August, signed "Z. Z.," is "supposed to be wrote" by "J——e F——g." Fielding was, as may be remembered, a Somersetshire man, Sharpham Park, his birthplace, being about three miles from Glastonbury; and he testifies to the "wonderful Effects of this salubrious Spring" in words which show that he had himself experienced them. "Having seen great Numbers of my

and scholarly, but formal and censorious man, whom Johnson called a "word-picker," and franker contemporaries "an old maid in breeches," has left a reference to Fielding at this time which is not flattering: "I dined with him [Ralph Allen] yesterday, where I met Mr. Fielding,—a poor emaciated, worn-out rake, whose gout and infirmities have got the better even of his buffoonery." (Letter to Balguy, dated "Inner Temple, 19th March, 1751.") That Fielding had not long before been dangerously ill, and that he was a martyr to gout, is fact: the rest is probably no more than the echo of a foregone conclusion, based upon report, or dislike to his works. Hurd praised Richardson and proscribed Sterne. He must have been wholly out of sympathy with the author of *Tom Jones*.

Fellow Creatures under two of the most miserable Diseases human Nature can labour under, the Asthma and Evil, return from *Glastonbury* blessed with the Return of Health, and having myself been relieved from a Disorder which baffled the most skilful Physicians," justice to mankind (he says) obliges him to take notice of the subject. The letter is interesting, more as showing that, at this time, Fielding's health was broken, than as proving the efficacy of the cure; for, whatever temporary relief the waters afforded, it is clear (as Mr. Lawrence pertinently remarks) that he derived no permanent benefit from them. They must, however, have continued to attract visitors, as a pump-room was opened in August, 1753; and, although they have now fallen into disuse, they were popular for many years.

But a more important occurrence than the discovery of the Somersetshire spring is a little announcement contained in Sylvanus Urban's list of publications for December, 1751, No. 17 of which is "*Amelia*, in 4 books, 12mo; by Henry Fielding, Esq." The publisher, of course, was Andrew Millar; and the actual day of issue, as appears from the *General Advertiser*, was December the 19th, although the title-page, by anticipation, bore the date of 1752. There were two mottoes, one of which was the appropriate—

> "*Felices ter & amplius*
> *Quos irrupta tenet Copula;*"

and the dedication, brief and simply expressed, was to Ralph Allen. As before, the "artful aid" of advertisement was invoked to whet the public appetite:

"To satisfy the earnest Demand of the Publick (says Millar), this Work has been printed at four Presses; but the Proprietor notwith-

standing finds it impossible to get them (*sic*) bound in Time, without spoiling the Beauty of the Impression, and therefore will sell them sew'd at Half-a-Guinea."

This was open enough; but, according to Scott, Millar adopted a second expedient to assist *Amelia* with the booksellers:

"He had paid a thousand pounds for the copyright; and when he began to suspect that the work would be judged inferior to its predecessor, he employed the following stratagem to push it upon the trade. At a sale made to the booksellers, previous to the publication, Millar offered his friends his other publications on the usual terms of discount; but when he came to *Amelia*, he laid it aside, as a work expected to be in such demand, that he could not afford to deliver it to the trade in the usual manner. The *ruse* succeeded—the impression was anxiously bought up, and the bookseller relieved from every apprehension of a slow sale."

There were several reasons why—superficially speaking—*Amelia* should be "judged inferior to its predecessor." That it succeeded *Tom Jones* after an interval of little more than two years and eight months would be an important element in the comparison, if it were known at all definitely what period was occupied in writing *Tom Jones*. All that can be affirmed is that Fielding must have been far more at leisure when he composed the earlier work than he could possibly have been when filling the office of a Bow Street magistrate. But, in reality, there is a much better explanation of the superiority of *Tom Jones* to *Amelia* than the merely empirical one of the time it took. *Tom Jones*, it has been admirably said by a French critic, "*est la condensation et le résumé de toute une existence. C'est le résultat et la conclusion de plusieurs années de passions et de pensées, la formule dernière et compléte de la philosophie personnelle que l'on s'est faite sur tout ce que*

l'on a vu et senti." Such an experiment, argues Planche, is not twice repeated in a lifetime: the soil which produced so rich a crop can but yield a poorer aftermath. Behind *Tom Jones* there was the author's ebullient youth and manhood; behind *Amelia* but a section of his graver middle-age. There are other reasons for diversity in the manner of the book itself. The absence of the initial chapters, which gave so much variety to *Tom Jones*, tends to heighten the sense of impatience which, it must be confessed, occasionally creeps over the reader of *Amelia*, especially in those parts where, like Dickens at a later period, Fielding delays the progress of his narrative for the discussion of social problems and popular grievances. However laudable the desire (expressed in the dedication) "to expose some of the most glaring Evils, as well public as private, which at present infest this Country," the result in *Amelia*, from an art point of view, is as unsatisfactory as that of certain well-known pages of *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit*. Again, there is a marked change in the attitude of the author—a change not wholly reconcilable with the brief period which separates the two novels. However it may have chanced, whether from failing health or otherwise, the Fielding of *Amelia* is suddenly a far older man than the Fielding of *Tom Jones*. The robust and irrepressible vitality, the full-veined delight of living, the energy of observation and strength of satire, which characterise the one give place in the other to a calmer retrospection, a more compassionate humanity, a gentler and more benignant criticism of life. That, as some have contended, *Amelia* shows an intellectual falling-off cannot for a moment be admitted, least of all upon the ground—as even so staunch an admirer as Mr. Keightley has allowed himself to believe—that certain of its incidents are ob-

viously repeated from the *Modern Husband* and others of the author's plays. At this rate *Tom Jones* might be judged inferior to *Joseph Andrews*, because the Political Apothecary in the "Man of the Hill's" story has his prototype in the *Coffee-House Politician*, whose original is Addison's Upholsterer. The plain fact is, that Fielding recognised the failure of his plays as literature; he regarded them as dead; and freely transplanted what was good of his forgotten work into the work which he hoped would live. In this, it may be, there was something of indolence or haste; but assuredly there was no proof of declining powers.

If, for the sake of comparison, *Tom Jones* may be described as an animated and happily-constructed comedy, with more than the usual allowance of first-rate characters, *Amelia* must be regarded as a one-part piece, in which the rest of the *dramatis personæ* are wholly subordinate to the central figure. Captain Booth, the two Colonels, Atkinson and his wife, Miss Matthews, Dr. Harrison, Trent, the shadowy and maleficent "My Lord," are all less active on their own account than energised and set in motion by Amelia. Round her they revolve; from her they obtain their impulse and their orbit. The best of the men, as studies, are Dr. Harrison and Colonel Bath. The former, who is as benevolent as Allworthy, is far more human, and, it may be added, more humorous in well-doing. He is an individual rather than an abstraction. Bath, with his dignity and gun-cotton honour, is also admirable, but not entirely free from the objection made to some of Dickens's creations, that they are rather characteristics than characters. Captain William Booth, beyond his truth to nature, manifests no qualities that can compensate for his weakness, and the best that can be said of

him is that, without it, his wife would have had no opportunity for the display of her magnanimity. There is also a certain want of consistency in his presentment; and when, in the residence of Mr. Bondum, the bailiff, he suddenly develops an unexpected scholarship, it is impossible not to suspect that Fielding was unwilling to lose the opportunity of preserving some neglected scenes of the *Author's Farce.* Miss Matthews is a new and remarkable study of the *femme entretenue*, to parallel which, as in the case of Lady Bellaston, we must go to Balzac; Mrs. James, again, is an excellent example of that vapid and colourless nonentity, the "person of condition." Mrs. Bennet, although apparently more contradictory and less intelligible, is nevertheless true to her past history and present environments; while her husband, the sergeant, with his concealed and reverential love for his beautiful foster-sister, has had a long line of descendants in the modern novel. It is upon Amelia, however, that the author has lavished all his pains, and there is no more touching portrait in the whole of fiction than this heroic and immortal one of feminine goodness and forbearance. It is needless to repeat that it is painted from Fielding's first wife, or to insist that, as Lady Mary was fully persuaded, "several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact." That famous scene where Amelia is spreading, for the recreant who is losing his money at the King's Arms, the historic little supper of hashed mutton which she has cooked with her own hands, and denying herself a glass of white wine to save the paltry sum of sixpence, "while her Husband was paying a Debt of several Guineas incurred by the Ace of Trumps being in the Hands of his Adversary"—a scene which it is impossible to read aloud without a certain huskiness in the throat—the visits to the pawnbroker and

the sponging-house, the robbery by the little servant, the encounter at Vauxhall, and some of the pretty vignettes of the children, are no doubt founded on personal recollections. Whether the pursuit to which the heroine is exposed had any foundation in reality it is impossible to say; and there is a passage in Murphy's memoir which almost reads as if it had been penned with the express purpose of anticipating any too harshly literal identification of Booth with Fielding, since we are told of the latter that, "though disposed to gallantry by his strong animal spirits, and the vivacity of his passions, he was remarkable for tenderness *and constancy to his wife* [the italics are ours], and the strongest affection for his children." These, however, are questions beside the matter, which is the conception of Amelia. That remains, and must remain forever, in the words of one of Fielding's greatest modern successors, a figure

> "Wrought with love . . .
> Nought modish in it, pure and noble lines
> Of generous womanhood that fits all time."

There are many women who forgive; but Amelia does more—she not only forgives, but she forgets. The passage in which she exhibits to her contrite husband the letter received long before from Miss Matthews is one of the noblest in literature; and if it had been recorded that Fielding—like Thackeray on a memorable occasion—had here slapped his fist upon the table and said, "*That* is a stroke of genius!" it would scarcely have been a thing to be marvelled at. One final point in connection with her may be noted, which has not always been borne in mind by those who depict good women — much after Hogarth's fashion—without a head. She is not by any

means a simpleton, and it is misleading to describe her as a tender, fluttering little creature, who, because she can cook her husband's supper, and caresses him with the obsolete name of Billy, must necessarily be contemptible. On the contrary, she has plenty of ability and good sense, with a fund of humour which enables her to slily enjoy and even gently satirise the fine lady airs of Mrs. James. Nor is it necessary to contend that her faculties are subordinated to her affections; but rather that conjugal fidelity and Christian charity are inseparable alike from her character and her creed.

As illustrating the tradition that Fielding depicted his first wife in Sophia Western and in Amelia, it has been remarked that there is no formal description of her personal appearance in his last novel, her portrait having already been drawn at length in *Tom Jones*. But the following depreciatory sketch by Mrs. James is worth quoting, not only because it indirectly conveys the impression of a very handsome woman, but because it is also an admirable specimen of Fielding's lighter manner:

"'In the first place,' cries Mrs. James, 'her eyes are too large; and she hath a look with them that I don't know how to describe; but I know I don't like it. Then her eyebrows are too large; therefore, indeed, she doth all in her power to remedy this with her pincers; for if it was not for those, her eyebrows would be preposterous.—Then her nose, as well proportioned as it is, has a visible scar on one side.[1]—Her neck likewise is too protuberant for the genteel size, especially as she laces herself; for no woman, in my opinion, can be genteel who is not entirely flat before. And lastly, she is both too short, and too tall.—Well, you may laugh, Mr. James, I know what I mean, though I cannot well express it. I mean, that she is too tall for a pretty woman, and too short for a fine woman. —There is such a thing as a kind of insipid medium—a kind of

[1] See note on this subject in Chapter IV.

something that is neither one thing or another. I know not how to express it more clearly; but when I say such a one is a pretty woman, a pretty thing, a pretty creature, you know very well I mean a little woman; and when I say such a one is a very fine woman, a very fine person of a woman, to be sure I must mean a tall woman. Now a woman that is between both, is certainly neither the one nor the other."

The ingenious expedients of Andrew Millar, to which reference has been made, appear to have so far succeeded that a new edition of *Amelia* was called for on the day of publication. Johnson, to whom we owe this story, was thoroughly captivated with the book. Notwithstanding that on another occasion he paradoxically asserted that the author was "a blockhead"—"a barren rascal"—he read it through without stopping, and pronounced Mrs. Booth to be "the most pleasing heroine of all the romances." Richardson, on the other hand, found "the characters and situations so wretchedly low and dirty" that he could not get farther than the first volume. With the professional reviewers, a certain "Criticulus" in the *Gentleman's* excepted, it seems to have fared but ill; and although these adverse verdicts, if they exist, are now more or less inaccessible, Fielding has apparently summarised most of them in a mock-trial of *Amelia* before the "*Court of* Censorial Enquiry," the proceedings of which are recorded in Nos. 7 and 8 of the *Covent-Garden Journal.* The book is indicted upon the Statute of Dulness, and the heroine is charged with being a "*low* Character," a "Milksop" and a "*Fool;*" with lack of spirit and fainting too frequently; with dressing her children, cooking, and other "servile Offices;" with being too forgiving to her husband; and lastly, as may be expected, with the inconsistency, already amply referred to, of being "a Beauty

without a nose." Dr. Harrison and Colonel Bath are arraigned much in the same fashion. After some evidence against her has been tendered, and "a Great Number of Beaus, Rakes, fine Ladies, and several formal Persons with bushy Wigs, and Canes at their Noses," are preparing to supplement it, a grave man steps forward, and, begging to be heard, delivers what must be regarded as Fielding's final apology for his last novel:

"If you, Mr. Censor, are yourself a Parent, you will view me with Compassion when I declare I am the Father of this poor Girl the Prisoner at the Bar; nay, when I go further and avow, that of all my Offspring she is my favourite Child. I can truly say that I bestowed a more than ordinary Pains in her Education; in which I venture to affirm, I followed the Rules of all those who are acknowledged to have writ best on the Subject; and if her Conduct be fairly examined, she will be found to deviate very little from the strictest Observation of all those Rules; neither Homer nor Virgil pursued them with greater Care than myself, and the candid and learned Reader will see that the latter was the noble model which I made use of on this Occasion.

"I do not think my Child is entirely free from Faults. I know nothing human that is so; but surely she doth not deserve the Rancour with which she hath been treated by the Public. However, it is not my Intention, at present, to make any Defence; but shall submit to a Compromise, which hath been always allowed in this Court in all Prosecutions for Dulness. I do, therefore, solemnly declare to you, Mr. Censor, that I will trouble the World no more with any Children of mine by the same Muse."

Whether sincere or not, this last statement appears to have afforded the greatest gratification to Richardson. "Will I leave you to Captain Booth?" he writes triumphantly to Mrs. Donnellan, in answer to a question she had put to him. "Captain Booth, Madam, has done his own business. Mr. Fielding has over-written himself, or rather *under*-written; and in his own journal seems ashamed of

his last piece; and has promised that the same Muse shall write no more for him. The piece, in short, is as dead as if it had been published forty years ago, as to sale." There is much to the same effect in the worthy little printer's correspondence; but enough has been quoted to show how intolerable to the super-sentimental creator of the high-souled and heroic Clarissa was his rival's plainer and more practical picture of matronly virtue and modesty. In cases of this kind, *parva seges satis est*, and Amelia has long since outlived both rival malice and contemporary coldness. It is a proof of her author's genius that she is even more intelligible to our age than she was to her own.

At the end of the second volume of the first edition of her history was a notice announcing the immediate appearance of the above-mentioned *Covent-Garden Journal*, a biweekly paper, in which Fielding, under the style and title of Sir Alexander Drawcansir, assumed the office of Censor of Great Britain. The first number of this new venture was issued on January the 4th, 1752, and the price was threepence. In plan, and general appearance, it resembled the *Jacobite's Journal*, consisting mainly of an introductory Essay, paragraphs of current news, often accompanied by pointed editorial comment, miscellaneous articles, and advertisements. One of the features of the earlier numbers was a burlesque, but not very successful, Journal of the present Paper War, which speedily involved the author in actual hostilities with the notorious quack and adventurer Dr. John Hill, who for some time had been publishing certain impudent lucubrations in the *London Daily Advertiser* under the heading of *The Inspector;* and also with Smollett, whom he (Fielding) had ridiculed in his second number, perhaps on account of that little paragraph in the first edition of *Peregrine Pickle*, to which

reference was made in an earlier chapter. Smollett, always irritable and combative, retorted by a needlessly coarse and venomous pamphlet, in which, under the name of "Habbakkuk Hilding, Justice, Dealer and Chapman," Fielding was attacked with indescribable brutality. Another, and seemingly unprovoked, adversary whom the *Journal of the War* brought upon him was Bonnel Thornton, afterwards joint-author with George Colman of the *Connoisseur*, who, in a production styled *Have at you All; or, The Drury Lane Journal*, lampooned Sir Alexander with remarkable rancour and assiduity. Mr. Lawrence has treated these "quarrels of authors" at some length; and they also have some record in the curious collections of the elder Disraeli. As a general rule, Fielding was far less personal and much more scrupulous in his choice of weapons than those who assailed him; but the conflict was an undignified one, and, as Scott has justly said, "neither party would obtain honour by an inquiry into the cause or conduct of its hostilities."

In the enumeration of Fielding's works it is somewhat difficult (if due proportion be observed) to assign any real importance to efforts like the *Covent-Garden Journal*. Compared with his novels, they are insignificant enough. But even the worst work of such a man is notable in its way; and Fielding's contributions to the *Journal* are by no means to be despised. They are shrewd lay sermons, often exhibiting much out-of-the-way erudition, and nearly always distinguished by some of his personal qualities. In No. 33, on "Profanity," there is a character-sketch which, for vigor and vitality, is worthy of his best days; and there is also a very thoughtful paper on "Reading," containing a kindly reference to "the ingenious Author of *Clarissa*," which should have mollified that implacable

moralist. In this essay it is curious to notice that, while Fielding speaks with due admiration of Shakspeare and Molière, Lucian, Cervantes, and Swift, he condemns Rabelais and Aristophanes, although in the invocation already quoted from *Tom Jones* he had included both these authors among the models he admired. Another paper in the *Covent-Garden Journal* is especially interesting, because it affords a clue to a project of Fielding's which unfortunately remained a project. This was a translation of the works of Lucian, to be undertaken in conjunction with his old colleague, the Rev. William Young. Proposals were advertised, and the enterprise was duly heralded by a "puff preliminary," in which Fielding, while abstaining from anything directly concerning his own abilities, observes: "I will only venture to say that no Man seems so likely to translate an Author well, as he who hath formed his Stile upon that very Author"—a sentence which, taken in connection with the references to Lucian in *Tom Thumb*, the *Champion*, and elsewhere, must be accepted as distinctly autobiographic. The last number of the *Covent-Garden Journal* (No. 72) was issued in November, 1752. By this time Sir Alexander seems to have thoroughly wearied of his task. With more gravity than usual he takes leave of letters, begging the public that they will not henceforth father on him the dulness and scurrility of his worthy contemporaries, "since I solemnly declare that, unless in revising my former Works, I have at present no Intention to hold any further Correspondence with the gayer Muses."

The labour of conducting the *Covent-Garden Journal* must have been the more severe in that, during the whole period of its existence, the editor was vigorously carrying out his duties as a magistrate. The prison and political scenes in *Amelia*, which contemporary critics regarded as

redundant, and which even to us are more curious than essential, testify at once to his growing interest in reform, and his keen appreciation of the defects which existed both in the law itself and in the administration of the law; while the numerous cases heard before him, and periodically reported in his paper by his clerk, afford ample evidence of his judicial activity. How completely he regarded himself (Bathurst and Rigby notwithstanding) as the servant of the public, may be gathered from the following regularly repeated notice:

"To the PUBLIC.

"All Persons who shall for the Future, suffer by Robbers, Burglars, &c., are desired immediately to bring, or send, the best Description they can of such Robbers, &c., with the Time and Place, and Circumstances of the Fact, to Henry Fielding, Esq.; at his House in Bow Street."

Another instance of his energy in his vocation is to be found in the little collection of cases entitled *Examples of the Interposition of Providence, in the Detection and Punishment of Murder*, published, with Preface and Introduction, in April, 1752, and prompted, as advertisement announces, "by the many horrid Murders committed within this last Year." It appeared, as a matter of fact, only a few days after the execution at Oxford, for parricide, of the notorious Miss Mary Blandy, and might be assumed to have a more or less timely intention; but the purity of Fielding's purpose is placed beyond a doubt by the fact that he freely distributed it in court to those whom it seemed calculated to profit.

The only other works of Fielding which precede the posthumously published *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* are the *Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor*, etc., a pamphlet dedicated to the Right Honble.

Henry Pelham, published in January, 1753; and the *Clear State of the Case of Elizabeth Canning*, published in March. The former, which the hitherto unfriendly *Gentleman's* patronisingly styles an "excellent piece," conceived in a manner which gives "a high idea of his [the author's] present temper, manners, and ability," is an elaborate project for the erection, *inter alia*, of a vast building, of which a plan, "drawn by an Eminent Hand," was given, to be called the County-house, capable of containing 5000 inmates, and including work-rooms, prisons, an infirmary, and other features, the details of which are too minute to be repeated in these pages, even if they had received any attention from the Legislature, which they did not. The latter was Fielding's contribution to the extraordinary judicial puzzle which agitated London in 1753–54. It is needless to do more than recall its outline. On the 29th of January, 1753, one Elizabeth Canning, a domestic servant, aged eighteen or thereabouts, and who had hitherto borne an excellent character, returned to her mother, having been missing from the house of her master, a carpenter, in Aldermanbury, since the 1st of the same month. She was half starved and half clad, and alleged that she had been abducted, and confined during her absence in a house on the Hertford road, from which she had just escaped. This house she afterwards identified as that of one Mother Wells, a person of very indifferent reputation. An ill-favoured old gipsy woman named Mary Squires was also declared by her to have been the main agent in ill-using and detaining her. The gipsy, it is true, averred that at the time of the occurrence she was a hundred and twenty miles away; but Canning persisted in her statement. Among other people before whom she came was Fielding, who examined her, as well as a young woman called Virtue

Hall, who appeared subsequently as one of Canning's witnesses. Fielding seems to have been strongly impressed by her appearance and her story, and his pamphlet (which was contradicted in every particular by his adversary, John Hill) gives a curious and not very edifying picture of the magisterial procedure of the time. In February, Wells and Squires were tried: Squires was sentenced to death, and Wells to imprisonment and burning in the hand. Then, by the exertions of the Lord Mayor, Sir Crisp Gascoyne, who doubted the justice of the verdict, Squires was respited and pardoned. Forthwith London was split up into Egyptian and Canningite factions; a hailstorm of pamphlets set in; portraits and caricatures of the principal personages were in all the print shops; and, to use Churchill's words,

> "*Betty Canning* was at least,
> With *Gascoyne's* help, a six months' feast."

In April, 1754, however, Fate so far prevailed against her that she herself, in turn, was tried for perjury. Thirty-six witnesses swore that Squires had been in Dorsetshire; twenty-six that she had been seen in Middlesex. After some hesitation, quite of a piece with the rest of the proceedings, the jury found Canning guilty; and she was transported for seven years. At the end of her sentence she returned to England to receive a legacy of £500, which had been left her by an enthusiastic old lady of Newington-green. Her "case" is full of the most inexplicable contradictions; and it occupies in the *State Trials* some 420 closely-printed pages of the most curious and picturesque eighteenth-century details. But how, from the 1st of January, 1753, to the 29th of the same month, Elizabeth Canning really did manage to spend her time is a secret that, to this day, remains undivulged.

CHAPTER VII.

"JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO LISBON."

In March, 1753, when Fielding published his pamphlet on Elizabeth Canning, his life was plainly drawing to a close. His energies indeed were unabated, as may be gathered from a brief record in the *Gentleman's* for that month, describing his judicial raid, at four in the morning, upon a gaming-room, where he suspected certain highwaymen to be assembled. But his body was enfeebled by disease, and he knew he could not look for length of days. He had lived not long, but much; he had seen in little space, as the motto to *Tom Jones* announced, "the manners of many men;" and now that, prematurely, the inevitable hour approached, he called Cicero and Horace to his aid, and prepared to meet his fate with philosophic fortitude. Between

> "*Quem fors dierum cunque dabit, lucro*
> *Appone,*"

and

> "*Grata superveniet, quæ non sperabitur, hora,*'

he tells us, in his too-little-consulted *Proposal for the Poor*, he had schooled himself to regard events with equanimity, striving above all, in what remained to him of life, to perform the duties of his office efficiently, and solicitous only for those he must leave behind him. Henceforward his

literary efforts should be mainly philanthropic and practical, not without the hope that, if successful, they might be the means of securing some provision for his family. Of fiction he had taken formal leave in the trial of *Amelia*, and of lighter writing generally in the last paper of the *Covent-Garden Journal*. But, if we may trust his Introduction, the amount of work he had done for this poor-law project must have been enormous, for he had read and considered all the laws upon the subject, as well as everything that had been written on it since the days of Elizabeth, yet he speaks nevertheless as one over whose head the sword had all the while been impending:

"The Attempt, indeed, is such, that the Want of Success can scarce be called a Disappointment, tho' I shall have lost much Time, and misemployed much Pains; and what is above all, shall miss the Pleasure of thinking that in the Decline of my Health and Life, I have conferred a great and lasting Benefit on my Country."

In words still more resigned and dignified he concludes the book:

His enemies [he says] will no doubt "discover, that instead of intending a Provision for the Poor, I have been carving out one for myself,[1] and have very cunningly projected to build myself a fine House at the Expence of the Public. This would be to act in direct Opposition to the Advice of my above Master [*i. e.*, Horace]; it would be indeed

'*Struere domos immemor sepulchri.*'

Those who do not know me, may believe this; but those who do, will hardly be so deceived by that Chearfulness which was always natural to me; and which, I thank God, my Conscience doth not reprove me for, to imagine that I am not sensible of my declining Constitution. . . . Ambition or Avarice can no longer raise a Hope, or dictate any Scheme to me, who have no further Design than to

[1] Presumably as Governor of the proposed County-house.

pass my short Remainder of Life in some Degree of Ease, and barely to preserve my Family from being the Objects of any such Laws as I have here proposed."

With the exception of the above, and kindred passages quoted from the Prefaces to the *Miscellanies* and the Plays, the preceding pages, as the reader has no doubt observed, contain little of a purely autobiographical character. Moreover, the anecdotes related of Fielding by Murphy and others have not always been of such a nature as to inspire implicit confidence in their accuracy, while of the very few letters that have been referred to, none have any of those intimate and familiar touches which reveal the individuality of the writer. But from the middle of 1753 up to a short time before his death, Fielding has himself related the story of his life, in one of the most unfeigned and touching little tracts in our own or any other literature. The only thing which, at the moment, suggests itself for comparison with the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* is the letter and dedication which Fielding's predecessor, Cervantes, prefixes to his last romance of *Persiles and Sigismunda.* In each case the words are animated by the same uncomplaining kindliness—the same gallant and indomitable spirit; in each case the writer is a dying man. Cervantes survived the date of his letter to the Conde de Lemos but three days; and the *Journal*, says Fielding's editor (probably his brother John), was "finished almost at the same period with life." It was written, from its author's account, in those moments of the voyage when, his womankind being sea-sick, and the crew wholly absorbed in working the ship, he was thrown upon his own resources, and compelled to employ his pen to while away the time. The Preface, and perhaps the Introduction, were added after his arrival at Lisbon, in the brief period

before his death. The former is a semi-humorous apology for voyage-writing; the latter gives an account of the circumstances which led to this his last expedition in search of health.

At the beginning of August, 1753, Fielding tells us, having taken the Duke of Portland's medicine[1] for near a year, "the effects of which had been the carrying off the symptoms of a lingering imperfect gout," Mr. Ranby, the King's Sergeant-Surgeon[2] (to whom complimentary reference had been made in the Man of the Hill's story in *Tom Jones*), with other able physicians, advised him "to go immediately to Bath." He accordingly engaged lodgings, and prepared to leave town forthwith. While he was making ready for his departure, and was "almost fatigued to death with several long examinations, relating to five different murders, all committed within the space of a week, by different gangs of street robbers," he received a message from the Duke of Newcastle, afterwards Premier, through that Mr. Carrington whom Walpole calls "the cleverest of all ministerial terriers," requesting his attendance in Lincoln's-inn Fields (Newcastle House). Being lame, and greatly over-taxed, Fielding excused himself. But the Duke sent Mr. Carrington again next day, and Fielding with great difficulty obeyed the summons. After waiting some three hours in the antechamber (no unusual feature, as Lord Chesterfield informs us, of the Newcastle audiences), a gentleman was deputed to consult him as to the devising of a plan for putting an immediate end to

[1] A popular eighteenth-century gout-powder, but as old as Galen. The receipt for it is given in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxiii., p. 579.

[2] Mr. Ranby was also the friend of Hogarth, who etched his house at Chiswick.

the murders and robberies which had become so common. This, although the visit cost him "a severe cold," Fielding at once undertook. A proposal was speedily drawn out and submitted to the Privy Council. Its essential features were the employment of a known informer, and the provision of funds for that purpose.

By the time this scheme was finally approved Fielding's disorder had "turned to a deep jaundice," in which case the Bath waters were generally regarded as "almost infallible." But his eager desire to break up "this gang of villains and cut-throats" delayed him in London; and a day or two after he had received a portion of the stipulated grant (which portion, it seems, took several weeks in arriving), the whole body were entirely dispersed—"seven of them were in actual custody, and the rest driven, some out of town, and others out of the kingdom." In examining them, however, and in taking depositions, which often occupied whole days and sometimes nights, although he had the satisfaction of knowing that during the dark months of November and December the metropolis enjoyed complete immunity from murder and robbery, his own health was "reduced to the last extremity."

"Mine [he says] was now no longer what is called a Bath case," nor, if it had been, could his strength have sustained the "intolerable fatigue" of the journey thither. He accordingly gave up his Bath lodgings, which he had hitherto retained, and went into the country "in a very weak and deplorable condition." He was suffering from jaundice, dropsy, and asthma, under which combination of diseases his body was "so entirely emaciated, that it had lost all its muscular flesh." He had begun with reason "to look on his case as desperate," and might fairly have regarded himself as voluntarily sacrificed to the good

of the public. But he is far too honest to assign his action to philanthropy alone. His chief object (he owns) had been, if possible, to secure some provision for his family in the event of his death. Not being a "trading justice"—that is, a justice who took bribes from suitors, like Justice Thrasher, in *Amelia*, or Justice Squeez'um, in the *Coffee House Politician*—his post at Bow Street had scarcely been a lucrative one. "By composing, instead of inflaming, the quarrels of porters and beggars (which I blush when I say hath not been universally practised) and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about 500*l.* a year of the dirtiest money upon earth to little more than 300*l.*, a considerable proportion of which remained with my clerk." Besides the residue of his justice's fees, he had also, he informs us, a yearly pension from the Government, "out of the public service-money," but the amount is not stated. The rest of his means, as far as can be ascertained, were derived from his literary labours. To a man of his lavish disposition, and with the claims of a family upon him, this could scarcely have been a competence; and if, as appears not very clearly from a note in the *Journal*, he now resigned his office to his half-brother, who had long been his assistant, his private affairs at the beginning of the winter of 1753-54 must, as he says, have "had but a gloomy aspect." In the event of his death his wife and children could have no hope except from some acknowledgment by the Government of his past services.

Meanwhile his diseases were slowly gaining ground. The terrible winter of 1753–54, which, from the weather record in the *Gentleman's*, seems, with small intermission, to have been prolonged far into April, was especially try-

ing to asthmatic patients, and consequently wholly against him. In February he returned to town, and put himself under the care of the notorious Dr. Joshua Ward, of Pall Mall, by whom he was treated and tapped for dropsy.[1] He was at his worst, he says, "on that memorable day when the public lost Mr. Pelham" (March 6th); but from this time he began, under Ward's medicines, to acquire "some little degree of strength," although his dropsy increased. With May came the long-delayed spring, and he moved to Fordhook,[2] a "little house" belonging to him at Ealing, the air of which place then enjoyed a considerable reputation, being reckoned the best in Middlesex, "and far superior to that of Kensington Gravel-Pits." Here a reperusal of Bishop Berkeley's *Siris*, which had been recalled to his memory by Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, "the inimitable author of the *Female Quixote*," set him drinking tar-water with apparent good effect, except as far as his chief ailment was concerned. The applications of the trocar became more frequent: the summer, if summer it could be called, was "mouldering away;" and winter, with all its danger to an invalid, was drawing on apace. Nothing seemed hopeful but removal to a warmer climate. Aix, in Provence, was at first thought of, but the idea was abandoned, on account of the difficulties of the journey.

[1] Ward appears in Hogarth's *Consultation of Physicians*, 1736, and in Pope—"Ward try'd on Puppies, and the Poor, his drop." He was a quack, but must have possessed considerable ability. Bolingbroke wished Pope to consult him in 1744; and he attended George II. There is an account of him in Nichols's *Genuine Works of Hogarth*, vol. i., p. 89.

[2] It lay on the Uxbridge road, a little beyond Acton, and nearly opposite the present Ealing Common Station of the Metropolitan District Railway. The site is now occupied by a larger house bearing the same name, belonging to Captain Tyrrell.

Lisbon, where Doddridge had died three years before, was then chosen; a passage in a vessel trading to the port was engaged for the sick man, his wife, daughter, and two servants; and after some delays they started. At this point the actual *Journal* begins with a well-remembered entry:

"*Wednesday, June 26th*, 1754.—On this day, the most melancholy sun I had ever beheld arose, and found me awake at my house at Fordhook. By the light of this sun, I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and take leave of some of those creatures on whom I doated with a mother-like fondness, guided by nature and passion, and uncured and unhardened by all the doctrine of that philosophical school where I had learnt to bear pains and to despise death.

"In this situation, as I could not conquer nature, I submitted entirely to her, and she made as great a fool of me as she had ever done of any woman whatsoever: under pretence of giving me leave to enjoy, she drew me to suffer the company of my little ones, during eight hours; and I doubt not whether, in that time, I did not undergo more than in all my distemper.

"At twelve precisely my coach was at the door, which was no sooner told me than I kiss'd my children round, and went into it with some little resolution. My wife, who behaved more like a heroine and philosopher, tho' at the same time the tenderest mother in the world, and my eldest daughter, followed me; some friends went with us, and others here took their leave; and I heard my behaviour applauded, with many murmurs and praises to which I well knew I had no title; as all other such philosophers may, if they have any modesty, confess on the like occasions."

Two hours later the party reached Rotherhithe. Here, with the kindly assistance of his and Hogarth's friend, Mr. Saunders Welch, High Constable of Holborn, the sick man, who, at this time, "had no use of his limbs," was carried to a boat, and hoisted in a chair over the ship's side. This latter journey, far more fatiguing to the sufferer than the twelve miles' ride which he had previously undergone, was not rendered more easy to bear by the

jests of the watermen and sailors, to whom his ghastly, death-stricken countenance seemed matter for merriment; and he was greatly rejoiced to find himself safely seated in the cabin. The voyage, however, already more than once deferred, was not yet to begin. Wednesday, being King's Proclamation Day, the vessel could not be cleared at the Custom House; and on Thursday the skipper announced that he should not set out until Saturday. As Fielding's complaint was again becoming troublesome, and no surgeon was available on board, he sent for his friend, the famous anatomist, Mr. Hunter, of Covent Garden,[1] by whom he was tapped, to his own relief, and the admiration of the simple sea-captain, who (he writes) was greatly impressed by "the heroic constancy, with which I had borne an operation that is attended with scarce any degree of pain." On Sunday the vessel dropped down to Gravesend, where, on the next day, Mr. Welch, who until then had attended them, took his leave; and Fielding, relieved by the trocar of any immediate apprehensions of discomfort, might, in spite of his forlorn case, have been fairly at ease. He had a new concern, however, in the state of Mrs. Fielding, who was in agony with toothache, which successive operators failed to relieve; and there is an unconsciously touching little picture of the sick man and his skipper, who was deaf, sitting silently over "a small bowl of punch" in the narrow cabin, for fear of waking the pain-worn sleeper in the adjoining state-room. Of his second wife, as may be gathered from the opening words of the *Journal*, Fielding always speaks with the warmest affection and gratitude. Elsewhere, recording a storm off the Isle of Wight, he says: "My dear wife and child must

[1] This must have been William Hunter, for in 1754 his more distinguished brother, John, had not yet become celebrated.

pardon me, if what I did not conceive to be any great evil to myself, I was not much terrified with the thoughts of happening to them: in truth, I have often thought they are both too good, and too gentle, to be trusted to the power of any man." With what a tenacity of courtesy he treated the whilom Mary Daniel may be gathered from the following vignette of insolence in office, which can be taken as a set-off to the malicious tattle of Walpole:

"Soon after their departure [*i. e.*, Mr. Welch and a companion], our cabin, where my wife and I were sitting together, was visited by two ruffians, whose appearance greatly corresponded with that of the sheriff's, or rather the knight-marshal's bailiffs. One of these especially, who seemed to affect a more than ordinary degree of rudeness and insolence, came in without any kind of ceremony, with a broad gold lace upon his hat, which was cocked with much military fierceness on his head. An inkhorn at his button-hole, and some papers in his hand, sufficiently assured me what he was, and I asked him if he and his companions were not custom-house officers; he answered with sufficient dignity that they were, as an information which he seemed to consider would strike the hearer with awe, and suppress all further inquiry; but on the contrary I proceeded to ask of what rank he was in the Custom house, and receiving an answer from his companion, as I remember, that the gentleman was a riding surveyor; I replied, that he might be a riding surveyor, but could be no gentleman, for that none who had any title to that denomination would break into the presence of a lady, without any apology, or even moving his hat. He then took his covering from his head, and laid it on the table, saying, he asked pardon, and blamed the mate, who should, he said, have informed him if any persons of distinction were below. I told him he might guess from our appearance (which, perhaps, was rather more than could be said with the strictest adherence to truth) that he was before a gentleman and lady, which should teach him to be very civil in his behaviour, tho' we should not happen to be of the number whom the world calls people of fashion and distinction. However, I said, that as he seemed sensible of his error, and had asked pardon, the lady would permit him to put his hat on again, if he chose it. This he refused with some

degree of surliness, and failed not to convince me that, if I should condescend to become more gentle, he would soon grow more rude."

The date of this occurrence was July the 1st. On the evening of the same day they weighed anchor and managed to reach the Nore. For more than a week they were wind-bound in the Downs; but on the 11th they anchored off Ryde, from which place, on the next morning, Fielding despatched the following letter to his brother. Besides giving the name of the captain and the ship, which are carefully suppressed in the *Journal*,[1] it is especially interesting as being the last letter written by Fielding of which we have any knowledge:

"On board the Queen of Portugal, Richd Veal at anchor on the Mother Bank, off Ryde, to the Care of the Post Master of Portsmouth—this is my Date and y^r Direction.

July 12 1754.

"Dear Jack, After receiving that agreeable Lre from Messrs. Fielding and Co., we weighed on monday morning and sailed from Deal to the Westward Four Days long but inconceivably pleasant Passage brought us yesterday to an Anchor on the Mother Bank, on the Back of the Isle of Wight, where we had last Night in Safety the Pleasure of hearing the Winds roar over our Heads in as violent a Tempest as I have known, and where my only Consideration were the Fears which must possess any Friend of ours, (if there is happily any such) who really makes our Wellbeing the Object of his Concern especially if such Friend should be totally inexperienced in Sea Affairs. I therefore beg that on the Day you receive this M^rs

[1] Probably this was intentional. Notwithstanding the statement in the "Dedication to the Public" that the text is given "as it came from the hands of the author," the *Journal*, in the first issue of 1755, seems to have been considerably "edited." "Mrs. Francis" (the Ryde landlady) is there called "Mrs. Humphrys," and the portrait of the military coxcomb, together with some particulars of Fielding's visit to the Duke of Newcastle and other details, are wholly omitted.

Daniel[1] may know that we are just risen from Breakfast in Health and Spirits this twelfth Instant at 9 in the morning. Our Voyage hath proved fruitful in Adventures all which being to be written in the Book, you must postpone y^r Curiosity As the Incidents which fall under y^r Cognizance will possibly be consigned to Oblivion, do give them to us as they pass. Tell y^r Neighbour I am much obliged to him for recommending me to the Care of a most able and experienced Seaman to whom other Captains seem to pay such Deference that they attend and watch his Motions, and think themselves only safe when they act under his Direction and Example. Our Ship in Truth seems to give Laws on the Water with as much Authority and Superiority as you Dispense Laws to the Public and Examples to y^r Brethren in Commission. Please to direct y^r Answer to me on Board as in the Date, if gone to be returned, and then send it by the Post and Pacquet to Lisbon to

"Y^r affec^t Brother
"H. FIELDING

"To John Fielding Esq. at his House in
Bow Street Cov^t Garden London."

As the *Queen of Portugal* did not leave Ryde until the 23rd, it is possible that Fielding received a reply. During the remainder of this desultory voyage he continued to beguile his solitary hours—hours of which we are left to imagine the physical torture and monotony, for he says but little of himself—by jottings and notes of the, for the most part, trivial incidents of his progress. That happy cheerfulness, of which he spoke in the *Proposal for the Poor*, had not yet deserted him; and there are moments when he seems rather on a pleasure-trip than a forlorn pilgrimage in search of health. At Ryde, where, for change of

[1] It will be remembered that the maiden-name of Fielding's second wife, as given in the Register of St. Bene't's, was Mary Daniel. "Mrs. Daniel" was therefore, in all probability, Fielding's mother-in-law; and it may reasonably be assumed that she had remained in charge of the little family at Fordhook.

air, he went ashore, he chronicles, after many discomforts from the most disobliging of landladies (let the name of Mrs. Francis go down to posterity!), "the best, the pleasantest, and the merriest meal, [in a barn] with more appetite, more real, solid luxury, and more festivity, than was ever seen in an entertainment at White's." At Torbay he expatiates upon the merits and flavour of the John Dory, a specimen of which "gloriously regaled" the party, and furnished him with a pretext for a dissertation on the London Fish Supply. Another page he devotes to commendation of the excellent *Vinum Pomonæ*, or Southam cider, supplied by "Mr. Giles Leverance of Cheeshurst, near Dartmouth, in Devon," of which, for the sum of five pounds ten shillings, he extravagantly purchases three hogsheads, one for himself, and the others as presents for friends, among whom no doubt was kindly Mr. Welch. Here and there he sketches, with but little abatement of his earlier gaiety and vigour, the human nature around him. Of the objectionable Ryde landlady and her husband there are portraits not much inferior to those of the Tow-wouses in *Joseph Andrews*, while the military fop, who visits his uncle the captain off Spithead, is drawn with all the insight which depicted the vagaries of Ensign Northerton, whom indeed the real hero of the *Journal* not a little resembles. The best character sketch, however, in the whole is that of Captain Richard Veal himself (one almost feels inclined to wonder whether he was in any way related to the worthy lady whose apparition visited Mrs. Bargrave at Canterbury!), but it is of necessity somewhat dispersed. It has also an additional attraction, because, if we remember rightly, it is Fielding's sole excursion into the domain of Smollett. The rough old sea-dog of the Haddock and Vernon period, who had been a privateer; and who still, as skipper

of a merchant-man, when he visits a friend or gallants the ladies, decorates himself with a scarlet coat, cockade, and sword; who gives vent to a kind of Irish howl when his favourite kitten is suffocated under a feather bed; and falls abjectly on his knees when threatened with the dreadful name of Law, is a character which, in its surly good humour and sensitive dignity, might easily, under more favourable circumstances, have grown into an individuality, if not equal to that of Squire Western, at least on a level with Partridge or Colonel Bath. There are numbers of minute touches—as, for example, his mistaking "a lion" for "Elias" when he reads prayers to the ship's company; and his quaint asseverations when exercised by the inconstancy of the wind—which show how closely Fielding studied his deaf companion. But it would occupy too large a space to examine the *Journal* more in detail. It is sufficient to say that after some further delays from wind and tide, the travellers sailed up the Tagus. Here, having undergone the usual quarantine and custom-house obstruction, they landed, and Fielding's penultimate words record a good supper at Lisbon, "for which we were as well charged, as if the bill had been made on the Bath Road, between Newbury and London." The book ends with a line from the poet whom, in the *Proposal for the Poor*, he had called his master:

"*Hic finis chartæque viæque.*"

Two months afterwards he died at Lisbon, on the 8th of October, in the forty-eighth year of his age.

He was buried on the hillside in the centre of the beautiful English cemetery, which faces the great Basilica of the Heart of Jesus, otherwise known as the Church of the Estrella. Here, in a leafy spot where the nightingales fill the still air with song, and watched by those secular cy-

presses from which the place takes its Portuguese name of *Os Cyprestes*, lies all that was mortal of him whom Scott called the "Father of the English Novel." His first tomb, which Wraxall found, in 1772, "nearly concealed by weeds and nettles," was erected by the English factory, in consequence mainly—as it seems—of a proposal made by an enthusiastic Chevalier de Meyrionnet, to provide one (with an epitaph) at his own expense. That now existing was substituted in 1830, by the exertions of the Rev. Christopher Neville, British Chaplain at Lisbon. It is a heavy sarcophagus, resting upon a large base, and surmounted by just such another urn and flame as that on Hogarth's Tomb at Chiswick. On the front is a long Latin inscription; on the back the better-known words:

"LUGET BRITANNIA GREMIO NON DARI
FOVERE NATUM."[1]

It is to this last memorial that the late George Borrow referred in his *Bible in Spain:*

"Let travellers devote one entire morning to inspecting the Arcos and the Mai das agoas, after which they may repair to the English church and cemetery, Père-la-chaise in miniature, where, if they be of England, they may well be excused if they kiss the cold tomb, as I did, of the author of *Amelia*, the most singular genius which their island ever produced, whose works it has long been the fashion to abuse in public and to read in secret."

Borrow's book was first published in 1843. Of late years the tomb had been somewhat neglected; but from a communication in the *Athenæum* of May, 1879, it appears that it had then been recently cleaned, and the in-

[1] The fifth word is generally given as "datum." But the above version, which has been verified at Lisbon, may be accepted as correct.

scriptions restored, by order of the present chaplain, the Rev. Godfrey Pope.

There is but one authentic portrait of Henry Fielding. This is the pen-and-ink sketch drawn from memory by Hogarth, long after Fielding's death, to serve as a frontispiece for Murphy's edition of his works. It was engraved in *facsimile* by James Basire, with such success that the artist is said to have mistaken an impression of the plate (without its emblematic border) for his own drawing. Hogarth's sketch is the sole source of all the portraits, more or less "romanced," which are prefixed to editions of Fielding; and also, there is good reason to suspect, of the dubious little miniature, still in possession of his descendants, which figures in Hutchins's *History of Dorset* and elsewhere. More than one account has been given of the way in which the drawing was produced. The most effective, and, unfortunately, the most popular, version has, of course, been selected by Murphy. In this he tells us that Hogarth, being unable to recall his dead friend's features, had recourse to a profile cut in paper by a lady, who possessed the happy talent which Pope ascribes to Lady Burlington. Her name, which is given in Nichols, was Margaret Collier, and she was possibly the identical Miss Collier who figures in Richardson's *Correspondence.* Setting aside the fact that, as Hogarth's eye-memory was phenomenal, this story is highly improbable, it was expressly contradicted by George Steevens in 1781, and by John Ireland in 1798, both of whom, from their relations with Hogarth's family, were likely to be credibly informed. Steevens, after referring to Murphy's fable, says in the *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth:* "I am assured that our artist began and finished the head in the presence of his wife and another lady. He had no assistance but

from his own memory, which, on such occasions, was remarkably tenacious." Ireland, in his *Hogarth Illustrated*, gives us as the simple fact the following: "Hogarth being told, after his friend's death, that a portrait was wanted as a frontispiece to his works, sketched this from memory." According to the inscription on Basire's plate, it represents Fielding at the age of forty-eight, or in the year of his death. This, however, can only mean that it represents him as Hogarth had last seen him. But long before he died disease had greatly altered his appearance; and he must have been little more than the shadow of the handsome Harry Fielding, who wrote farces for Mrs. Clive, and heard the chimes at midnight. As he himself says in the *Voyage to Lisbon*, he had lost his teeth, and the consequent falling-in of the lips is plainly perceptible in the profile. The shape of the Roman nose, which Colonel James in *Amelia* irreverently styled a "proboscis," would, however, remain unaltered, and it is still possible to divine a curl, half humorous, half ironic, in the short upper lip. The eye, apparently, was dark and deep-set. Oddly enough, the chin, to the length of which he had himself referred in the *Champion*, does not appear abnormal.[1] Beyond the fact that he was above six feet in height, and, until the gout had broken his constitution, unusually robust, Mur-

[1] In the bust of Fielding which Miss Margaret Thomas has been commissioned by Mr. R. A. Kinglake to execute for the Somerset Valhalla, the Shire-hall at Taunton, these points have been carefully considered; and the sculptor has succeeded in producing a work which, while it suggests the mingling of humour and dignity that is Fielding's chief characteristic, is also generally faithful to Hogarth's indications. From these, indeed, it is impossible to deviate. Not only is his portrait unique, but (and this is confirmed by Ireland and Steevens) it was admitted to be like Fielding by Fielding's friends.

phy adds nothing further to our idea of his personal appearance.

That other picture of his character, traced and retraced (often with much exaggeration of outline), is so familiar in English literature, that it cannot now be materially altered or amended. Yet it is impossible not to wish that it were derived from some less prejudiced or more trustworthy witnesses than those who have spoken — say, for example, from Lyttelton or Allen. There are always signs that Walpole's malice, and Smollett's animosity, and the rancour of Richardson, have had too much to do with the representation; and even Murphy and Lady Mary are scarcely persons whom one would select as ideal biographers. The latter is probably right in comparing her cousin to Sir Richard Steele. Both were generous, kindly, brave, and sensitive; both were improvident; both loved women and little children; both sinned often, and had their moments of sincere repentance; to both was given that irrepressible hopefulness, and full delight of being, which forgets to-morrow in to-day. That Henry Fielding was wild and reckless in his youth it would be idle to contest—indeed, it is an intelligible, if not a necessary, consequence of his physique and his temperament. But it is not fair to speak of him as if his youth lasted for ever. "Critics and biographers," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, "have dwelt far too exclusively upon the uglier side of his Bohemian life;" and Fielding himself, in the *Jacobite's Journal*, complains sadly that his enemies have traced his impeachment "even to his boyish Years." That he who was prodigal as a lad was prodigal as a man may be conceded; that he who was sanguine at twenty would be sanguine at forty (although this is less defensible) may also be allowed. But, if we press for "better assurance than Bardolph,"

there is absolutely no good evidence that Fielding's career after his marriage materially differed from that of other men struggling for a livelihood, hampered with ill-health, and exposed to all the shifts and humiliations of necessity. If any portrait of him is to be handed down to posterity, let it be the last rather than the first—not the Fielding of the green-room and the tavern, of Covent Garden frolics and "modern conversations;" but the energetic magistrate, the tender husband and father, the kindly host of his poorer friends, the practical philanthropist, the patient and magnanimous hero of the *Voyage to Lisbon.* If these things be remembered, it will seem of minor importance that to his dying day he never knew the value of money, or that he forgot his troubles over a chicken and champagne. And even his improvidence was not without its excusable side. Once—so runs the legend—Andrew Millar made him an advance to meet the claims of an importunate tax-gatherer. Carrying it home, he met a friend, in even worse straits than his own; and the money changed hands. When the tax-gatherer arrived there was nothing but the answer—"Friendship has called for the money and had it; let the collector call again." Justice, it is needless to say, was satisfied by a second advance from the bookseller. But who shall condemn the man of whom such a story can be told?

The literary work of Fielding is so inextricably interwoven with what is known of his life that most of it has been examined in the course of the foregoing narrative. What remains to be said is chiefly in summary of what has been said already. As a dramatist he has no eminence; and though his plays do not deserve the sweeping condemnation with which Macaulay once spoke of them in the House of Commons, they are not likely to attract

any critics but those for whom the inferior efforts of a great genius possess a morbid fascination. Some of them serve, in a measure, to illustrate his career; others contain hints and situations which he afterwards worked into his novels; but the only ones that possess real stage qualities are those which he borrowed from Regnard and Molière. *Don Quixote in England*, *Pasquin*, the *Historical Register*, can claim no present consideration commensurate with that which they received as contemporary satires, and their interest is mainly antiquarian; while *Tom Thumb* and the *Covent-Garden Tragedy*, the former of which would make the reputation of a smaller man, can scarcely hope to be remembered beside *Amelia* or *Jonathan Wild*. Nor can it be admitted that, as a periodical writer, Fielding was at his best. In spite of effective passages, his essays remain far below the work of the great Augustans, and are not above the level of many of their less illustrious imitators. That instinct of popular selection, which retains a faint hold upon the *Rambler*, the *Adventurer*, the *World*, and the *Connoisseur*, or at least consents to give them honourable interment as "British Essayists" in a secluded corner of the shelves, has made no pretence to any preservation, or even any winnowing, of the *Champion* and the *True Patriot*. Fielding's papers are learned and ingenious; they are frequently humorous; they are often earnest; but it must be a loiterer in literature who, in these days, except for antiquarian or biographical purposes, can honestly find it worth while to consult them. His pamphlets and projects are more valuable, if only that they prove him to have looked curiously and sagaciously at social and political problems, and to have striven, as far as in him lay, to set the crooked straight. Their import, to-day, is chiefly that of links in a chain

—of contributions to a progressive literature which has travelled into regions unforeseen by the author of the *Proposal for the Poor*, and the *Inquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers.* As such, they have their place in that library of political economy of which Mr. M'Culloch has catalogued the riches. It is not, however, by his pamphlets, his essays, or his plays that Fielding is really memorable; it is by his triad of novels, and the surpassing study in irony of *Jonathan Wild.* In *Joseph Andrews* we have the first sprightly runnings of a genius that, after much uncertainty, had at last found its fitting vein, but was yet doubtful and undisciplined: in *Tom Jones* the perfect plan has come, with the perfected method and the assured expression. There is an inevitable loss of that fine waywardness which is sometimes the result of untrained effort, but there is the general gain of order, and the full production which results of art. The highest point is reached in *Tom Jones*, which is the earliest definite and authoritative manifestation of the modern novel. Its relation to De Foe is that of the vertebrate to the invertebrate; to Richardson, that of the real to the ideal—one might almost add, the impossible. It can be compared to no contemporary English work of its own kind; and if we seek for its parallel at the time of publication we must go beyond literature to art—to the masterpiece of that great pictorial satirist who was Fielding's friend. In both Fielding and Hogarth there is the same constructive power, the same rigid sequence of cause and effect, the same significance of detail, the same side-light of allusion. Both have the same hatred of affectation and hypocrisy — the same unerring insight into character. Both are equally attracted by striking contrasts and comic situations; in both there is the same declared morality of

purpose, coupled with the same sturdy virility of expression. One, it is true, leaned more strongly to tragedy, the other to comedy. But if Fielding had painted pictures, it would have been in the style of the *Marriage à la Mode;* if Hogarth had written novels, they would have been in the style of *Tom Jones.* In the gentler and more subdued *Amelia*, with its tender and womanly central-figure, there is a certain change of plan, due to altered conditions—it may be, to an altered philosophy of art. The narrative is less brisk and animated; the character-painting less broadly humorous; the philanthropic element more strongly developed. To trace the influence of these three great works in succeeding writers would hold us too long. It may, nevertheless, be safely asserted that there are few English novels of manners, written since Fielding's day, which do not descend from him as from their fount and source; and that more than one of our modern masters betrays unmistakable signs of a form and fashion studied minutely from his frank and manly ancestor.

POSTSCRIPT.

A FEW particulars respecting Fielding's family and posthumous works can scarcely be omitted from the present memoir. It has been stated that by his first wife he had one daughter, the Eleanor Harriot who accompanied him to Lisbon, and survived him, although Mr. Keightley says, but without giving his authority, she did not survive him long. Of his family by Mary Daniel, the eldest son, William, to whose birth reference has already been made, was bred to the law, became a barrister of the Middle Temple eminent as a special pleader, and ultimately a Westminster magistrate. He died in October, 1820, at the age of seventy-three. He seems to have shared his father's conversational qualities,[1] and, like him, to have been a strenuous advocate of the poor and unfortunate. Southey, writing from Keswick in 1830 to Sir Egerton Brydges, speaks of a meeting he had in St. James's Park, about 1817, with one of the novelist's sons. "He was then," says Southey, "a fine old man, though visibly shaken by time: he received me in a manner which had much of old courtesy about it, and I looked upon him with great interest for his father's sake." The date, and the fact that William Fielding had had a paralytic stroke, make it almost certain that this was he; and a further reference by Southey

[1] *Vide* Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, chap. l.

to his religious opinions is confirmed by the obituary notice in the *Gentleman's*, which speaks of him as a worthy and pious man. The names and baptisms of the remaining children, as supplied for these pages by the late Colonel Chester, were: Mary Amelia, baptized January 6, 1749; Sophia, January 21, 1750; Louisa, December 3, 1752; and Allen, April 6, 1754, about a month before Fielding removed to Ealing. All these baptisms took place at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, from the registers of which these particulars were extracted. The eldest daughter, Mary Amelia, does not appear to have long survived, for the same registers record her burial on the 17th of December, 1749. Allen Fielding became a clergyman, and died, according to Burke, in 1823, being then vicar of St. Stephen's, Canterbury. He left a family of four sons and three daughters. One of the sons, George, became rector of North Ockendon, Essex, and married, in 1825, Mary Rebecca, daughter of Ferdinand Hanbury-Williams, and grandniece of Fielding's friend and school-fellow, Sir Charles. This lady, who so curiously linked the present and the past, died not long since at Hereford Square, Brompton, in her eighty-fifth year. Mrs. Fielding herself (Mary Daniel) appears to have attained a good old age. Her death took place at Canterbury on the 11th of March, 1802, perhaps in the house of her son Allen, who is stated by Nichols in his *Leicestershire* to have been rector in 1803 of St. Cosmus and Damian-in-the-Blean. After her husband's death, her children were educated by their uncle John and Ralph Allen, the latter of whom—says Murphy—made a very liberal annual donation for that purpose; and (adds Chalmers in a note) when he died, in 1764, bequeathed to the widow and those of her family then living the sum of £100 each.

Among Fielding's other connections it is only necessary to speak of his sister Sarah, and his above-mentioned brother John. Sarah Fielding continued to write; and in addition to *David Simple*, published the *Governess*, 1749; a translation of Xenophon's *Memorabilia;* a dramatic fable called the *Cry*, and some other forgotten books. During the latter part of her life she lived at Bath, where she was highly popular, both for her personal character and her accomplishments. She died in 1768; and her friend, Dr. John Hoadly, who wrote the verses to the *Rake's Progress*, erected a monument to her memory in the Abbey Church.

> "Her unaffected Manners, candid Mind,
> Her Heart benevolent, and Soul resign'd,
> Were more her Praise than all she knew or thought,
> Though Athens Wisdom to her Sex she taught,"

says he; but in mere facts the inscription is, as he modestly styles it, a "deficient Memorial," for she is described as having been born in 1714 instead of 1710, and as being the second daughter of General *Henry* instead of General *Edmund* Fielding. John Fielding, the novelist's half-brother, as already stated, succeeded him at Bow Street, though the post is sometimes claimed (on Boswell's authority) for Mr. Welch. The mistake no doubt arose from the circumstance that they frequently worked in concert. Previous to his appointment as a magistrate, John Fielding, in addition to assisting his brother, seems to have been largely concerned in the promotion of that curious enterprise, the "Universal-Register-Office," so often advertised in the *Covent-Garden Journal*. It appears to have been an estate office, lost property office, servants' registry, curiosity shop, and multifarious general agency.

As a magistrate, in spite of his blindness, John Fielding was remarkably energetic, and is reported to have known more than 3000 thieves by their voices alone, and could recognise them when brought into Court. He wrote a description of London and Westminster, as well as some professional and other works. He was knighted in 1761, and died at Brompton Place in 1780. Lyttelton, who had become Sir George in 1751, was raised to the peerage as Baron Lyttelton of Frankley three years after Fielding's death. He diedi n 1773. In 1760–65 he published his *Dialogues of the Dead*, profanely characterised by Mr. Walpole as "Dead Dialogues." No. 28 of these is a colloquy between "Plutarch, Charon, and a Modern Bookseller," and it contains the following reference to Fielding: "We have [says Mr. Bookseller] another writer of these imaginary histories, one who has not long since descended to these regions. His name is Fielding; and his works, as I have heard the best judges say, have a true spirit of comedy, and an exact representation of nature, with fine moral touches. He has not indeed given lessons of pure and consummate virtue, but he has exposed vice and meanness with all the powers of ridicule." It is perhaps excusable that Lawrence, like Roscoe and others, should have attributed this to Lyttelton; but the preface nevertheless assigns it, with two other dialogues, to a "different hand." They were, in fact, the first essays in authorship of that illustrious blue-stocking, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu.

Fielding's only posthumous works are the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* and the comedy of *The Fathers; or, The Good-Natur'd Man.* The *Journal* was published in February, 1755, together with a fragment of a Comment on Bolingbroke's *Essays*, which Mallet had issued in March of the previous year. This fragment must there-

fore have been begun in the last months of Fielding's life; and, according to Murphy, he made very careful preparation for the work, as attested by long extracts from the Fathers and the leading controversialists, which, after his death, were preserved by his brother. Beyond a passage or two in Richardson's *Correspondence*, and a sneering reference by Walpole to Fielding's "account how his dropsy was treated and teased by an innkeeper's wife in the Isle of Wight," there is nothing to show how the *Journal* was received, still less that it brought any substantial pecuniary relief to "those innocents," to whom reference had been made in the "Dedication." The play was not placed upon the stage until 1778. Its story, which is related in the *Advertisement*, is curious. After it had been set aside in 1742,[1] it seems to have been submitted to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. Sir Charles was just starting for Russia, as Envoy Extraordinary. Whether the MS. went with him or not is unknown; but it was lost until 1775 or 1776, when it was recovered in a tattered and forlorn condition by Mr. Johnes, M.P. for Cardigan, from a person who entertained a very poor and even contemptuous opinion of its merits. Mr. Johnes thought otherwise. He sent it to Garrick, who at once recognised it as "Harry Fielding's Comedy." Revised and retouched by the actor and Sheridan, it was produced at Drury Lane, as *The Fathers*, with a prologue and epilogue by Garrick. For a few nights it was received with interest, and even some flickering enthusiasm. It was then withdrawn, and there is no likelihood that it will ever be revived.

[1] *Vide* Chapter. IV., p. 89.

THE END.

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